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Courtesy F. W. PUTNAM.

“On this height is one of the most singular earthworks that the world has ever seen” (page 24).

THE VANISHED EMPIRE

A TALE OF THE MOUND BUILDERS.

BY
WALDO H. DUNN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
J. P. MAC LEAN, Ph. D.

Author of "A Manual of the Antiquity of Man," "Mastodon, Mammoth and Man," and "The Mound Builders."

*But ah! what once has been shall be no more!
The groaning earth in travail and in pain
Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
And the dead nations never rise again.*

—LONGYELLOW,
The Jewish Cemetery at Newport.

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DEDICATORY LETTER:

TO

PROF. LOUIS F. COLEMAN.

My Dear Professor:—Some years have passed since I sat under your instruction, in what we were wont to call the “Dingy Old Castle.” During these years the lessons which I learned there have been sinking the deeper into my mind. It was there, and by you, that the love of letters was inspired within me, and there I caught the first look into the distant fields of learning. You first “blue-penciled” the themes of “budding genius,” at the same time uttering words of encouragement and praise, which incited to greater effort. During the years which have passed since then, I also owe much to your kind words of friendship and advice.

And so it is only natural that to you I should dedicate this little tale. If there is anything of good in it, none can appreciate it more than you;—than yourself, none will be more ready to pardon what is bad. If you recognize in it any of the little “catch-on” phrases, you will know that the boy was only father to the man:—smile to yourself and pass on.

The writing of this has been a pleasure to me. It has called back memories of the old days, and led me into paths of thought which I am loath to leave. If these words awaken within you any pleasant memories of the past, I shall feel that I am amply repaid for making these shadowy sketches of these still more shadowy ages.

And now, wishing you well throughout the coming years, I remain, as of old,

Sincerely your friend,

WALDO H. DUNN.

The Maples: August 1903.

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INTRODUCTION.

The study of American archæology has not been of popular interest. The books written upon the subject are legion, and yet those the most accurate have met with a limited demand. Among the early productions there was one, composed of odds and ends, with detached statements and unsubstantiated theories, that met with a phenomenal sale. Long since it went out of the market, and now it is only regarded as one of the curiosities of literature.

The monuments left by an unknown people, who, for the want of a better term, have been denominated "The Mound Builders," must ever awaken an interest in the minds of those devoted to history, antiquities, and the general progress of mankind. The history of America does not commence either with the advent of the Caucasian or the earliest known status of the Red Man. Back of the latter is a history that must be solved by long and patient industry. Great strides have been made in this direction and an interest quickened.

The future is one wholly of speculation. We know not what the morrow may bring forth. While struggling with the problems of the present, yet we live in the past. Our minds continually dwell on fond recollections and traditions; the records of heroes, and the general movements of mankind, form an essential part of our thoughts, and give zest in the formation of our characters. The future is shaped by the past.

The lover of history is not governed by the cold facts he reads in the words of his favorite chroniclers. His imagination pictures the scenes as he passes from page to page, and, if of a philosophical turn, he connects the past with the present. When he comes to ponder over ancient remains of man, not connected with any written memorials, a different picture is presented for his contemplation. There is a fascination about it which only the past known and the past unknown can possibly create.

Associated with history is romance. There can be no romance without history, or facts upon which it is based. The nearer romance approaches history the more entertaining it becomes. The novels of Sir Walter Scott must

ever be popular because in them is interwoven actual history with enough imagination to connect the whole in an unbroken chain. But it took something more than historical incidents and imagination to make the Waverly Novels. Back of these was a genius that possessed the power of welding until the superstructure was complete in all its apartments.

The mere narration of events constitutes written history, and the more accurate the account the greater is the value. But such a history will never reach the popular mind. Americans boast they are not an imaginative people, but are engaged in the stern realities of life. All nations are imaginative to a greater or less degree, and the bent of the American mind will mark well up on the general average. If there was no other proof of this fact than the sales of books devoted wholly to fiction or romance, the evidence would be sufficient. That there has been a vast improvement in this direction, it is not necessary here to enter into an argument to maintain the proof.

I have often wondered why some man gifted with fancy and with force sufficient has not portrayed life among the Mound Builders. The

groundwork is sufficiently broad, and the surroundings appeal to the mind gifted in poetry and song. A pen picture could be readily drawn by one who has the power to enter into the soul of things. A study of the various structures left by the Mound Builders in the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi afford food for reflection on the manners and customs of an ancient people. The daily life may be unknown, but painted in the likeness of another people enjoying a similar degree of civilization, the canvas may present a prospect that will delight the eye.

The value of history and of archæology needs no defense or explanation, for it is universally admitted. History has been popularized, but archæology has not yet attained unto that rank. I wish it were otherwise. I see no future in this direction unless it is touched by the hand of romance. The glamour that romance can throw over it will make the study easy for those not adapted to prolonged investigation; for thus the mind can be carried along by the recital, and thus eased of the burden of supporting the subject.

The enclosed pages are an attempt to bring the question of the Mound Builders before the public in a suitable form to meet a demand in enlarging an interest in the lost race of the basin of the Mississippi. The author is to be congratulated in his self-imposed task. Not only is he a pioneer in the service, but in this romance he has taken a long step in the right direction. He has entered a field which must necessarily prove to be of advantage to the investigator, as well as to extend useful information beyond the reach of the plodder. In this work he is certain to arrest the attention of those who could not be otherwise sought, and thus encourage those seeking for details.

The investigator realizes that our mental horizon needs to be enlarged, and all energies put forth in that direction advance civilization. While conceding all that may be claimed for the field of romance, he fully realizes that his own sphere is not thereby circumscribed.

J. P. Mac Lean.

THE VANISHED EMPIRE.

A Tale of the Mound Builders.

CHAPTER I.

THE VISION BEAUTIFUL.

On this very spot generation after generation has stood, has lived, has warred, grown old, and passed away; and not only their names, but their nation, their language have perished; and utter oblivion has closed over their once populous abodes. We call this the New World. It is old! Age after age, and one revolution after another, has passed over it; but who shall tell its history?—B. M. NORMAN.

When Rome was the acknowledged mistress of the world, and Julius Cæsar was carrying her standards far into Gaul, a nation—differing from her widely in race, religion and customs—occupied the heart of our North American continent. Here, separated from the nations of Europe and Asia by two great oceans, it had grown and extended, in peace and quietness, until at this time it was at the height of its development.

Drawing aside the veil of centuries, we are permitted to take a passing glance at the “things that have passed away.” Over all the fertile region from the Appalachians to the Mississippi, from the Great Lakes to south of the

beautiful Ohio River, this nation extended, though the center of its population and activity was in the great southern section of the State of Ohio. The vision presented to the eye, as one could have seen it from many a noble height, was one of incomparable beauty.

Over all the land stretched the deep, dense forest, except where the active toilers had cleared it away in regular and shapely areas, to permit of cultivation, building and fortification. Dotted here and there, at distant intervals, were the villages—small collections of ingeniously constructed huts, laid out in regular order. Every village was surrounded by its fortifications—lofty banks, thrown up by the diligent inhabitants. Both within and without the embankments were small, conical mounds, on which were the shrines and temples. As the vision widened, taking in all the vast region at a glance, the panorama was wonderful. Great stretches of green forest—in pleasing contrast the small villages; the gentle, rising slopes of the fortifications covered with a robe of verdure; the mounds rising like sentinels—and at longer distances rose great, lofty mounds, lifting their summits hundreds of feet above the surrounding country, mantled in green, and looking quietly down on the scenes below.

All this region was filled with the industrious race that had planned and builded the nation.

Here they were—toiling in the fields, paddling down the swift-flowing streams, worshipping in their temples, building their great mounds and earthworks—a simple, childlike, peaceful race, though one that at heart was noble, heroic and religious.

Extending as they did, over an immense area, with villages quite widely separated, the population was not great. The streams and rivers afforded a means of communication to every part of the country; the forests furnished game in plenty; the well-cultivated fields yielded bounteously, and thus, bound together by ties of race, language and religion, though separated by miles and miles of forest country, they were united under one government and one ruler.

Here, while Rome was subduing barbarous nations; while the ambition of Cæsar was driving him relentlessly on to his fate; while war and rapine and horror were filling all southern Europe—this quiet nation was lying, snugly nestled in the North American forests, all unmindful of the terrible struggles shaking the mistress of the world.

Without war or bloodshed, with no raging, burning ambition, in simple, childlike quiet, they lived and wrought, a factor in God's great scheme; some, to be sure, dreaming of the great mysteries of nature around them, viewing the heavens at night with reverent awe, worship-

ing the brilliant orb of light as the progenitor and ruler of their nation; some living on, as do many now, simply existing—working, striving, filling some niche in the plan of the universe.

How peaceful a scene it was, under the brilliant rays of the noontide sun. What a quiet stole over it on sunny afternoons, when the forests swayed lightly in the breezes, the insects hummed lazily in the air, and the rivers purled and rippled in the shades. It was a *Vision Beautiful*, the home of a race that has long since vanished, of a race whose only monuments are fast being leveled by the remorseless hand of Time, a race known to us by a name indicative of their greatest works—THE MOUND BUILDERS.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATION.

Out of the dust that slumbers on the ground
What sounds unto the poet's ears arise,
What visions to his eyes!
Then in the present's loud, tumultuous sound
He finds what silences where men and walls
Are as the dust that falls!

—SAMUEL V. COLE.

The people of this isolated region were true children of nature. In appearance they were tall, straight, and of commanding presence; many of them being almost giants in stature. Their complexion was rather fair; their brows well developed; their faces beardless. They resembled, in their every action, the ancient Romans more than they did the Red Men, whom the first settlers found here. Their appearance betokened that they were of noble origin, with an element of true greatness and character in them.

They lived in almost perfect harmony; no enemy had ever molested them, nor had they ever sought to conquer other nations. In consequence of this, the art of warfare was not carefully cultivated among them. True, they had their primitive weapons—bows, arrows, stone hatchets, axes, and other smaller axes and knives of copper—but these were used in the peaceful pur-

suits of life, and very rarely were lifted against a fellow-being.

As we study the customs of ancient peoples, we are at once struck with the great reverence they exhibited for nature and the phenomena of nature. The further back we go in the history of the world, the more this is exhibited. Among the people of every race and nation was this true: the lightnings, the thunder, the winds, were worshiped; animals and inanimate things were vested with supernatural qualities. It is a strange thing to contemplate—this nature-worship. In the early dawn of the world, when the human race was yet young, and when the works of creation were newer than now, we find the being—man—bowing down, with awe, before the majesty of it all!

We can not but confess that, of all nature-worship, the highest and best is the worship of the sun, the moon and the stars. These three—the most striking objects of the heavens, exerting as they do a wonderful power on the earth—have, from the beginning, been worshiped by ancient nations. The simple beings beholding the brilliant glory of the sun, the calm beauty of the moon, and the twinkling stars, with their regular and unceasing appearances, at once came to look upon them as the ruling forces of earth, and worshiped them with all the strength and simplicity of their impressionable souls. These

were the deities of this people, and over all the country arose many a green mound, holding on its summit a shrine, at which homage was paid and sacrifice offered to them. At these shrines the youth were taught the rudiments of their religion, the traditions of their race, and the use of weapons and implements, by the priests who presided over them. Such a religion, in such a country, could not be anything but simple, pure and strangely inspiring.

The government was such as the majority of the early nations had. Supreme power was vested in one ruler, known in different countries by various titles, but in English the word "King" expresses the full extent of his duties. To this king all the country was subject, each fortified village being locally ruled by a governor, directly responsible to him. The King, governors and priests exerted a wonderful influence over the mass of the people, and were obeyed with a willingness and zeal that is unknown among civilized nations, and which only existed among the earliest ages of the world's history.

Industry was one of the most marked traits of the people. The villages were constructed with the utmost care, the fields were carefully cultivated, and order and thoroughness everywhere prevailed. Great numbers of laborers were employed in constructing the mounds of worship and observation, and the walls of the

villages. Owing to their primitive methods of working, these were slow in building and represented an immense expenditure of labor. But the workers toiled on cheerfully—feeling that they were obeying the commands of their rulers, and beautifying and strengthening the land which they loved so well. Many were employed in manufacturing their weapons and implements; others in turning out skillfully wrought ornaments and pieces of pottery, while still others made long journeys far up to the “Great Waters” for copper, or down to the “Warm Countries” for mica. The rivers were plied by their swift-going canoes, carrying the products of earth and man from village to village. The whole country was a scene of unceasing industry.

History has attempted to give us an idea of the events that have transpired among the nations of the earth. In a measure it has done this, but in the main how signally has it failed! Who can write the history of a nation? Who can write the history of a city? Yea, even more, who can write the history of a single life, and portray the lights and shadows, the hopes and fears, the sorrows and joys of its throbbing heart? It is impossible. Our best histories give us only a glimpse of nations; these glimpses are generally of some gigantic figures rising in the background—some figures that have become

the great representatives of that nation or time. At mention of Greece, there comes before our vision Demosthenes, Socrates, Miltiades; Macedonia is only Alexander; Carthage nothing more than Hannibal; Rome is Cæsar—these are all. History has failed; time conquers; the bulk of the world is forgotten, and only the greatest figures stand out in bold relief to give us some idea of what has been. This is all that remains to us of this race—this is all we can see of them, look as long as we may; beyond the few personages that shall rise before us, there will be only clouds and shadows, only

“silences where men and walls
Are as the dust that falls!”

It seems that some men are born to rule. They tower above the mass of humanity, as the pillars of the Temple of Karnak tower above the earth. Their form, their mien, their words, mark them as leaders. What strange power is this, that is everywhere recognized—recognized to-day, as it has been from the dawn of man's history? We can not say. It is the subtle, invisible something about the one possessing it, that bends everything coming in contact with it. Such a personage was Oko, the King and head of this forest nation. He was a giant physically, as well as mentally. As he stood among the chiefs of his council, how he towered above them.

His figure was erect, his limbs strong and shapely, his face and forehead denoted great intellectual ability. As he talked earnestly to his councilors, how his black eyes flashed, how his frame trembled with the earnestness of his conversation. His black hair fell loosely over his shoulders; his plain, ingeniously woven robe hung in straight folds from his body—his entire appearance makes us know that we are beholding a leader; one who has the ability to rule a nation, and who will die for the sake of his convictions and his people.

In the council which was frequently called together to consult with him, were others with whom we shall be called in contact. There was an old man, slightly bowed with the weight of years, whose face also betokened great mental vigor and strong character. His long robes were of the same material as that of the King, though they were wrought with many strange and fantastic figures. This was the High-Priest of the nation, the most confidential adviser of the King, the head of the whole religious order. We can find no figure in ancient history to compare with him save Leo, Bishop of Rome, who met the fierce Attila by the banks of the Mincio, and for the time turned the barbarian tide from Rome. He had the same greatness of character, the same depth of religious ardor, and the same love for his country. Though his history has

never been written, Gilgo, the High-Priest, was one of nature's noblemen.

One other in that council stood out prominently—Bodo, who was the secret adviser, might we say, secretary, of the King? We notice him because he forms such a contrast to the others in the assembly. He is small—there is a dwarfish look about him; his eyes are small, black and beady; his gaze is wavering and uncertain. He has always been faithful, and his cunning is unsurpassed. He plays a greater part in the history of the nation than does Oko, or Gilgo, or the great mass of the common people.

CHAPTER III.

SUCH WAS THEIR FAITH.

Religions, dreams and empires all have gone,
Like shapes of night, that vanish from the dawn,
While through the ages earth went rolling on.

—J. A. EDGERTON.

Rising abruptly from the banks of a small southern Ohio stream, to a height of more than one hundred feet, is a crescent-formed spur of land. The place affords a grand outlook, and is so located as to be easily guarded. On this height is one of the most singular earthworks that the world has ever seen. It was a wonderful spectacle at this time. A long embankment, probably ten feet in height, ingeniously coiled to represent the folds of a serpent, stretched out its length over a thousand feet. Within the jaws of this enormous serpent was the outlined form of an egg, which the reptile seemed to be in the act of swallowing. Exactly at the center of this egg-shaped embankment was a large stone altar. Near the open jaws of the serpent, to the right, was a large oval mound; while not far from the coiled tail rose another conical mound, almost thirty feet high.

On both of these mounds were well-constructed huts. They were built, to be sure, only of poles and bark, but in a substantial and strangely artistic manner. They were covered

over, without, with crude figures and hieroglyphics, fashioned of beads, colored shells and stones. All the embankments were covered with a heavy mantle of grass, which was kept well trimmed. It would have been a scene of wonder to a being of this latter age, and even to-day, sunken and dismantled as it is, it is regarded with strange awe, and carefully preserved as one of the greatest effigy mounds in North America. This was the seat of the religion of which the aged Gilgo was High-Priest.

The forms of this religion were simple, though awesome. The High-Priest spent all his life at this place, living in the hut on the oval mound. All the youth of the country who were destined to be priests and the religious instructors of the people were sent here for their education and training. These youths lived apart from the sacred precincts of the holy place, in a little village, planned especially for them. This village was not fortified, as it was considered sacrilegious to fortify near the High-Priest's domains. The entire place was guarded by some twenty trusted watches, who paced the extremities of the bluff, by turns, night and day. These watches were also quartered at the village.

At daybreak, just as the first rays of the sun were flooding the land with light, and causing the dewdrops to sparkle like myriad diamonds, the worship began. Headed by Gilgo,

the youth marched, one after the other, up the pathway from the village to the high mound at the serpent's tail. Slowly ascending this, they arranged themselves in a semi-circle behind the High-Priest, facing the rising sun, and all in unison prostrated themselves three times. Then all chanted a dirge—a few metrical lines composed by their greatest bard, long since dead—which had been handed down by word of mouth, from priest to priest, for centuries. The peculiar meter and intonation of their language is lost to us, but the substance of the dirge is contained in the lines which follow:

“Behold in ancient might the Sun,
His ever-glorious courses run;
Oh, author of life and destiny,
We humbly, humbly worship Thee!”

This was chanted until the sun was high in the heavens, when they entered the hut—a most sacred shrine—and were led in prayer by Gilgo.

Bowing himself before a great blanket, fastened to the wall, on which was an image of the sun, wrought in beads, and with his back to the assembly, the great Priest poured forth his soul:

“Oh, thou great and mighty spirit, whose glory is such that it dazzles our vision, we reverently bow ourselves before thee in humble worship, as thou lookest down upon us, on this, another day. To thee, O everlasting one, we owe

our being and our daily existence; for thee, day after day, we strive, that we also, after finishing this fitful struggle of life, may be with thee, in thy majesty in the heavens. Strengthen our daily lives, and cause them to grow in purpose and in strength, even as you cause the earth, our dwelling-place, to robe herself in living splendor. Look down upon this assembly of youth, who are to become children of thine; glorify them in their work that they may become powers for good in this world. And then, oh, omnipotent source of every blessing, when you veil your face, that we, and all the earth may rest, send forth thy priestess and thy host of shining saints to guard us."

Passing forth from the shrine and down the side of the mound, they march slowly around, still chanting the holy dirge, to the oval mound. Here they all pause at the base, while Gilgo ascends, and, after prostrating himself before the entrance, and muttering a few unintelligible words, he turns, and, lifting his hands, says:

"Enter, O children, into the sacred and holy apartments of the great Sun-god. See that thy thoughts are pure and fixed on holy things. Tremble in his awful presence!"

With slow pace and solemn tread they enter the mystic portals and seat themselves upon mats spread on the floor. It is their instruction hour.

Let us inspect the interior of this holy shrine—a shrine erected by a people to whom no god had ever declared himself; a shrine dedicated to a god existing only in the minds of his worshipers, yet a god that exerted a great influence for good. It is a large, square room, with roof well above the heads of the occupants. Near the wall opposite the entrance, curtains, formed of the skins of wild animals, divide the room into two apartments. At the right and left, and immediately in front of these curtains, are quaintly constructed rustic tables, on which set earthen jars, filled with oil, which is burning brightly. The light only partially illumines the room, leaving a strange darkness in the corners, and throwing great fantastic shadows on the floor and walls. The walls and ceiling are covered with valuable skins, decorated with devices of sun and moon and stars—wrought with beads and shells, or stained in varied colors. Sitting around in silent groups are the worshipful youth; before them, in his priestly robes, Gilgo—all looking somber and ghostly in the dim light.

And now Gilgo opens his instruction, explaining the great mysteries to youthful listeners, just gaining their first insight into the religion of their fathers. He starts by telling them of their nation:

“Children, you are to learn the traditions and religion of your fathers, so that when I and

all the other priests have passed away, you may guide the people into the paths of light and goodness. Ages ago, our forefathers fled from a country where darkness and oppression reigned. From the far North they came, over stormy waters that threatened to dash their frail barks to pieces; but the powers of good were with them, and after traveling many day's journeys through inhospitable regions, they reached this glorious land of peace and quiet. Among their number was a very learned priest, who inscribed the history of their wanderings on a small stone tablet, together with a prophecy of the greatness that our nation would attain, and a strange device, which has a meaning full of import to us."

Drawing aside the curtains, he revealed to them a small wooden altar, on which rested the tablet. One by one, they came and looked carefully upon it, listening attentively as Gilgo gave the meaning of the strange characters upon it:

"From the far North we came, over the stormy waters and through the barren hills. The God of glory looked down upon us and blessed our nation. To his trusted priests he has given this tablet and stamped upon it this device, which means, that as long as it is kept safe in the hands of the priests, the nation will stand.

"Yet another must you see, and one that is so holy that none but the hands of the High-Priest may touch it. This was given by the great Sun-god himself, to our first High-Priest, and represents the wondrous glories of his power. When the Sun-god placed it in the holy Siggo's hand, it had the tracings of the great promise on it; he required that the same tracings should be copied by Siggo on the opposite side, and copied from memory. After many months of patient study, the great priest traced the work, and received the meaning and reward from the God. Look you upon it."

Here Gilgo pulled aside the next pair of curtains and revealed, upon a larger altar, the precious tablet.

"Here you see," he said, pointing with immovable finger, "the great Sun-god who rules the earth and universe. Here is the dark divide between the earth and the realms of the God in the heavens. Beyond the divide we again see the God in his realms, and the glories that surround him. There are many other symbols which have meanings that you may know only after you have studied and prayed and lived a holy life for many years. Now I turn the tablet over and you see the tracings made by the faithful Siggo. How well and perfectly it is done, when we reflect that he was only a being of earth, copying the work of a God. While he was studying and

striving to commit to memory the holy tracings, and while he was doing the work, he knew not the wondrous salvation he was working; for the Sun-god, to reward his piety and faith, gave him the great reward. 'Oh, faithful Siggo,' said the God, 'you have worked the redemption of your nation. You have copied the great tracings of my glory. You have written heavenly things in a world of sin. On one side of this tablet is the power of the priest-order; on the other, my power. Those of the world who follow the teachings of the priests, shall, at death, be taken into my glory, even as the earth-tracings on this tablet have heavenly traces on the other side. Think what a glorious promise.'

For a moment all stood silent. Then Gilgo motioned them out, and quietly closed the curtains behind them. Standing again in the open, lighted area of the room, he commanded them to face the burning lights.

"These," he said, "are the eternal witnesses of the splendor and brilliancy of the great Sun-god. This everlasting fire was given by him to our holy Siggo, and has ever since, all down through the ages, been kept burning by the High-Priests. It must always be so; when they are allowed to die out, I fear for the world!"

And the old priest placed his hands over his eyes to shut out the vision of the horrors such an event might occasion.

“Behold, also, my children, this mound. It represents a serpent, the emblem of sin, prostrated beneath the dazzling glory of the Sun-god, and being slowly choked by the priestly order, which it is endeavoring to destroy. Here, having portrayed before you the great struggle between good and evil, you are to learn how to conquer the evil.

“And now, my children, we must offer up the first sacrifice in your behalf; that you may become good, faithful and holy priests. Each of you pass by the consecrated wood, near the door, and take one fagot as you go forth. Place these on the altar, as you offer up prayer for the strengthening of your faith. I shall come forth presently, with the sacrifice.”

Passing slowly out, they did as he commanded, and soon Gilgo appeared, with a small hare in his hands. Holding this over the altar, he slit its throat, and, pouring the blood over the fagots, chanted slowly. Then, placing the hare on the fagots, he lighted them, and as the young men, standing on the egg-shaped embankment, formed a circle around the altar, and the smoke went curling heavenward, Gilgo offered prayer for them:

“Oh, source of all our life and being, purify the hearts of these, thy children. Make them holy; teach them that it is good for them to live in peace and harmony one with another; keep

them from the sin and vice of the world, and grant that they may ever labor for the good of thy people, and be pleasing to thee, in the splendor of thy glory. Cause them to know that human life is sacred, that deceit is ungodly, and that love is the greatest good. This is my prayer, and for this I offer the sacrifice most pleasing to thee."

That was all! This religion, formulated by man, and handed down by man, had in it, as we see, all the elements of holiness. Though man-made, it had in it the elements of godliness, and, lived up to, was ennobling. Does this not go to prove that, from the beginning, man has had in him a spark of divinity—of something heavenly? Else why this constant looking to something higher? Why this striving for the Infinite? Man in all ages has recognized some Being, higher, purer, than anything earthly. With eyes blinded by fears and worldliness, he has worshiped this Being in varied ways. And yet, will not the one great God, who holds the destinies of all worlds and all nations in His hand, and who has held them from the beginning, will not He understand the longings and reachings of the human soul after His infinite goodness, and reward them, in spite of the strange ceremonies and creeds with which they are surrounded?

CHAPTER IV.

THE FORERUNNER OF FATE.

A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The reign of King Oko had been a most successful one. He had visited almost every part of his kingdom, and had taken great care to encourage all the industries of his subjects. He was a devout believer in the religion which had its birth with the nation, and the most influential of the priests were in close touch with him. His great council-chamber was near the headwaters of the Holy River, in a large and beautiful village, containing many typical earth-works, and strangely fashioned geometrical designs, which added to the beauty of the country's capital. For several years Oko had not left his capital, being occupied with many problems of government, but he was kept well informed on all matters throughout his land, by trusted messengers. Every precaution had been taken to establish order and peace over all the country, but there had been no regulations concerning people of another country, for the subjects of King Oko knew nothing of the existence of any other nation, save the one recorded in their ancient traditions as a land of oppression; and

this was "far away," beyond the "great waters." But they were destined soon to know of another race—a strange race, a warlike race.

The inhabitants of a village, in the far southern part of the limits of Oko's kingdom, were startled by the appearance of a large number of strange men, who one day appeared at the edge of the forest surrounding the village. The strangers were tall, with dark countenances, wore but little clothing, and were armed with large, well-wrought swords. They halted for a time, at the edge of the forest, and seemed to be earnestly consulting among themselves. Soon they turned and motioned slowly to the frightened villagers, who were standing together in awed groups, watching their every movement. Their beckonings were not understood, and presently one of their number cried out in a strange tongue, but could not make his meaning clear to the watching groups. Meanwhile, one of the villagers had hastened to the village ruler's hut and related to him the strange story. In great haste he came forth, surrounded by his bodyguard, and halted at a short distance from the strangers. He shouted to them, and they returned the salute, neither party realizing in any particular the intention of the other. Then a sudden thought seemed to strike the leader of the dark-visaged band: he advanced a few steps, laid his sword on the ground, walked

back from it, prostrated himself on the earth, rose, pointed to his mouth, and then to the mouths of his followers. The village chief rightly inferred that they had no savage intentions; that they were hungry, and wished to be allowed to advance to the village. He, in turn, laid his stone ax on the ground, saluted them, then started for the village, beckoning to them to follow.

The village chief took them to his hut, which was large and strongly built; here a generous feast was provided for the strange guests, and a vain effort was made by both sides to be understood. With great difficulty they succeeded in making clear to the villagers that they came from the south, intimating by continued sweeping gestures that it was a far journey in that direction. They exhibited their bows and arrows, knives and battle-axes, and showed the wondering people the sharp, metal swords they carried, explaining that they had many of them, and showing the terrible execution that could be done with them, by clipping off large branches of trees. The villagers were frightened by the sight of the destructive weapons, and the war-like aspect of the newcomers, but were soon reassured when they smilingly laid them down on the ground again, and shook their heads, as if assuring them that they meant no harm. As the night drew on, the leader intimated to the

village chief that they wished to spend the night in the village. The request was granted, and soon they were quartered in the best apartments of the chief's hut. That night a heavy guard was stationed at all parts of the village. It was the first great alarm the people had ever experienced, and they expected, hourly, to be attacked and butchered.

When morning came, the village chief held a long conference with the leader of the band, and they spent much time in trying to make themselves understood. When the conference ended, it was agreed that the strangers should stay in the village, until the leader had learned the language, for he indicated by pointing first to his mouth and tongue, and then to the south, that he had much to tell them of that country, and also vaguely impressed them with the understanding that he represented a great King, and a land where the huts were not of wood and bark. He also declared that his men would work while in the village, and abstain from every pillage and depredation. He seemed to be quite troubled at finding inhabitants in this region, and pointed northward and around in a circle, and asked many questions in his strange language which were not understood. He expressed a desire to learn the language, at once.

He applied himself earnestly to the study, and under the instruction of the priest at the vil-

lage, could soon make himself plainly understood.

"I come," he said, "from the far southern country, where the great King reigns. The buildings there are large and wonderful, and the country a warm and beautiful land. I am a servant of the great King, and these are the men under my command. We had been traveling for many moons, before we reached the village. We were hunting forests where game was plenty, and for places where the hard metal, here, is found," pointing to the sword.

"Had you ever traveled near here before?" asked the chief.

"Yes," was the reply; "I have been a few moons' journey from here many times, but we never knew that the country here was inhabited. Tell me," he said, "of your country and your people; tell me of your King."

The village chief told him of the great region his countrymen inhabited, of the noble King who ruled over it, of the peacefulness and industry of his fellow-countrymen, and of the long years they had held the region.

"It is all wonderful," was the reply; "we have many different nations in the south country, though all are like us in color and appearance; we wage war also—fierce, bloody war—and we are the conquerors, and have subdued many nations," and here the martial spirit rose in him,

his eyes flashed and his bosom heaved, as he related many bloody tales of daring.

“But you are different,” he continued; “your faces are paler, you do not seem warlike, you give us food to eat, and treat us kindly. I am the messenger of the great King among all the nations near us, and now that I have found people with whom we have never treated, it is necessary that I should see your King, and bear word from him to my ruler, in order that we may make a treaty and arrange to carry on an exchange of products, for you have many things which we do not have, and we have many things which you do not have. Gain a hearing for me and my followers with him as soon as you can, for we have lingered here many moons, and must soon depart, for we have many, many waters to cross before reaching the royal city.”

The village chief was glad that the stranger desired to see King Oko, for the presence of the armed band in the village was a constant worry to him, and he was quick to shift the care of the band into the hands of the King himself. He therefore arranged to conduct the royal messenger to Oko, as soon as possible. Providing a large force to accompany the band, he placed in command of it one of his most trusted guards, and taking care that the force was well armed with battle-axes, knives, and bows and arrows and in charge of competent guides, he gave a

message to his guard for King Oko, and gave the order for the embassy to proceed.

For many days they traveled, sometimes paddling their light bark canoes along the waters of densely shaded rivers, and again marching through the great, silent forests, carrying their canoes until they reached another stream. At last they came to the waters of the Holy River, and soon the small fleet was swiftly gliding over its surface—on, on, up, up, until they came to a point near Oko's village. Another march through the forest brought them within sight of the nation's unique capital. They encamped without the fortifications of the village for the night, and until arrangements could be made with King Oko to receive the royal messenger.

On the morrow the guard in charge of the embassy proceeded to the King's council-chamber, and related the village chief's message to Oko and Bodo. They heard it with wonder and alarm. Oko was visibly affected; for years his nation had lived and prospered; now its very existence was likely to be threatened by a savage and warlike race. Why should he receive the royal messenger? Why send a message to the great King? Why not hold the messenger and his followers prisoners, or kill them as enemies of his country? The great King would then suppose that the band had perished; he

would never know. This would end all danger and trouble. It was the better way. All these thoughts passed through Oko's mind in the few minutes after he heard the story. Then the nobility of his nature manifested itself; the teachings of his religion, instilled in him when a youth, rose clearly before him.

"They are human beings," he thought, "as are my people. They came with no evil intentions; they simply chanced to find the village. I must hear the messenger of the great King. I must treat him kindly; I must see that we live in peace with this new nation."

The good within him prevailed, and, turning to his trusted adviser, he said:

"Bodo, it is doubtless right that we receive the messenger, and arrange to make a treaty with his nation. It is all that is left for us to do. Do you not think so?"

"Yes, great King, it is all we can do," replied Bodo.

"Then," continued Oko, "we shall receive the royal messenger this afternoon, in our council-chamber. See that he is well cared for, and treat him as a brother. Show him that ours is not a hostile, bloodthirsty nation."

The guard saluted, and passed out to report the King's reply.

The morning was spent in arranging the council-chamber to receive the messenger, and in

deliberating concerning the future. It was decided that the entire band, escorted by Bodo and the guard from the southern village, should be brought into the presence of Oko, and Queen Gurda, his wife—a noble woman, loved by all subjects of the land, and a most valued and trusted adviser of her husband.

All was excitement throughout the capital when it was learned that the representatives of a great and powerful nation were about to be brought into the presence of the King, and a hush spread through the entire village. Soon after the sun had crossed the meridian, the guard informed the royal messenger to prepare to enter the council-chamber of the King, and in a few minutes the embassy was moving towards the village. With measured tread, the company passed slowly through the streets, along which great crowds had gathered to catch a glimpse of the dark-faced men. They were astonished at the strange attire, the dark faces and the dangerous-looking weapons of the strangers. The procession soon arrived at the door of the council-chamber, and was admitted by Bodo. On marched the guard, straight up before the King and Queen, then, halting, he said :

“Lo! you are in the presence of the great King Oko and the good Queen Gurda. Bow yourselves down before their great majesty and tremble in their council-chamber.”

The company prostrated themselves on the skins before the seats of the rulers, until commanded by Bodo to rise. As they rose they exhibited no fear, but gazed steadfastly at the two royal personages. As the eyes of the dark-visaged leader fell upon Queen Gurda, he started perceptibly. Never before had he gazed upon such fair beauty. The Queen sat on a rustic couch, over which were thrown furs of the most valuable kind; she was attired simply but strikingly: the blanket which hung in loose folds from her shoulders was wrought in many strange devices with colored beads; her tapering, shapely arms lay over the dark skins, showing in contrast the copper bracelets encircling them; her well-developed, fair neck was circled by a necklace of white bone beads; her hair fell in dark masses over her neck and shoulders; but most of all, the fair, intellectual face, the calm forehead, the dark, soulful eyes of the woman captivated this dark son of the South. Here before him was a vision, the like of which he had never beheld, even in his dreams; and well might he gaze, for he was looking upon a woman whose beauty rivaled that of Diana, and whose heart and soul—pure and fresh in this dawn of the world—were more steadfast and true than any possessed by the famous beauties of contemporary Greece and Rome. This daughter of the forest, learned only in the teachings of her re-

ligion, and actuated by the promptings of a soul near to nature, was a type of womanhood such as the world seldom sees.

For a few moments there was silence. It was broken by the calm voice of Oko :

"Messenger of the great South King, we welcome you. For years we have lived here, not knowing that another nation existed near us. Your coming is a great surprise to me, yet, since it seems destined that we must become known to each other, it is well that we should make terms by which we may live in peace. Tell us of your country."

The messenger related the long history of his nation: how, through many years, they had contended in fierce warfare with neighboring tribes; how they had built their wonderful temples to strange idols; told of blood and strife and human sacrifice. The tale horrified the listeners.

"For years we have had no contentions among us. We have lived in peace and happiness. Do not quiet and peace appeal to you? Will not your great King live on terms of peace with us? We are not a warring people."

"Our great King is a mighty warrior; he delights in long, fierce conquests; he delights to conquer. But you are a strange people; you have treated me kindly; you are not like the savage tribes around us. The great King may live on terms of peace with you. I shall tell

him of your kindness," responded the messenger.

"And tell him," said Gurda, in her low, soft accents, "tell him that we treat all men as brothers; tell him that we should all do good one to another, and not strive together in bloody warfare. Will you tell him this for us?"

"Yes, most beautiful Queen, I shall tell him this. He would no doubt cease warring if he were implored to do so by so gracious a being. We have no Queen like the noble Gurda," he replied, as he again kneeled before her.

After a long conference, the messenger was instructed to say to the great King that Oko desired to make a treaty and to exchange pledges of good faith.

"Take him, from us," said the King, "this stone ax as a symbol that our nation does not desire to lift it in war against yours; and also take this robe, on which is the image of the great Sun-god, by whom we swear to treat all your messengers with the greatest fidelity. As a token of my great respect for you and your King, I shall send, to accompany you to the southern village, my trusted adviser Bodo. He shall receive all the messengers that your King sends in the future. You may now depart."

As the bright moon was rising over the forest-clad hills, pouring a subdued, mellow, golden light over all the land, the embassy, accompanied by Bodo, was swiftly speeding down the waters

of the Holy River. The canoes sped along in silence; nothing was heard but the occasional dip of an oar, the sighing of the wind through the forest branches, or the shrill cry of some night bird. Among all the band, only one was thinking deeply, seriously. That was the royal messenger.

“Never before have I seen such beauty, never such a vision. This must certainly be one of the spirits in the great lands of which the priests have told,” he mused, as his thoughts turned to Gurda. “And she is the Queen of this nation, the wife of the great King. As such, it is beyond my power to gain her, unless I come with a great band of warriors, overrun the nation and carry her away. To do this will require the aid of some spy here. Who shall it be? Who shall it be? I shall hunt one. Yes, yes, I shall try this Bodo, this dwarfish adviser; he looks like a crafty, selfish man.”

A resolution with this savage southern warrior was the beginning of an action. During all the remainder of the journey, he worked upon the avarice and cupidity of Bodo. He told him of the great wealth of his country, of the great temples and buildings, of the wonderful wars and the booty captured in them. It captivated the cunning dwarf, and his eyes shone with repressed envy.

"And to think that you might have a share of all this," said the warrior; "you could even get a high position under the great King and lord it over the common people; you could live in a great house and have piles of golden ornaments. Here," he said, looking contemptuously around over the quiet landscape, "you are nothing. You live on, a useless, monotonous life. You should be in the service of the great King."

"But how can I do it?" asked Bodo. "I am subject here to the King. If I leave, I shall be hunted down. It is impossible."

"Listen," the warrior replied; "do you really wish to enter the service of my King and become a warrior of great power?"

"I do, I do," Bodo eagerly replied.

"Are you willing to run a great risk to help me in a dangerous undertaking, if I will promise you this place?"

"I am willing, I am willing. What is it?"

"Help me to conquer this nation. Give me aid in the war I wage against it, and promise to deliver into my hands Queen Gurda."

The request fairly took away Bodo's breath. Though treacherous at heart, treachery had been so long smothered within him, and obedience had so become a second nature to him, that it was hard for him to break the chains of old habits. The warrior saw that he was wavering. Skillfully and craftily he renewed his appeals

to Bodo's baser desires. He pictured great, glowing visions of power and wealth. The temptation was too great to resist. Bodo's mind was on fire. All the old ties of duty and loyalty were broken.

"I promise you everything," he said.

Thus the compact was made. During all the remaining time that the two were together, the bonds fastened more closely on Bodo. The southern village was reached and the two parted.

"I shall soon return with a vast army of warriors," said the stranger. "Have everything in readiness. Receive the messengers when they come and care for them well. Great power and wealth shall be yours."

The two representatives of the two nations parted. One turned southward with his band, the other northward. Murderous thoughts occupied the minds of both. O royal messenger, what a viper! O Bodo, where is your fidelity! Thus it has been for ages: kindness and trustfulness rewarded by baseness and treachery!

CHAPTER V.

THE FORESHADOWINGS.

A day of darkness and gloom:
A day of clouds, and of thick darkness.
As a dusk spread upon the mountains,
Cometh a numerous people and strong.

The land is as the garden of Eden before them,
And behind them, a desolate wilderness.

—BIBLE.

For many moons the dark-faced messenger and his band of followers traveled southward. Through dark forests, across great streams, and over mountain ways, they pressed on and on until they came into the limits of their own country. And it was a wonderful country. Tropical vegetation growing in lavish luxuriance, spread over the entire landscape; great villages, built of large, strongly made houses, three and sometimes four stories in height, were to be seen on every hand; temples of immense size and beauty reared their forms among the gigantic palms and tropic flowers. Throughout all this region, this dark, semi-barbarous, warlike people lived. They exercised supreme authority over all the petty tribes and nations existing near, and had reached a state of great strength and power. These were the ancestors of the strange and highly cultivated race, found

by the Spaniards, when they first set foot on the American continent. These were the builders of those wonderful cities and temples—the ruins of which exist to-day—silent witnesses of former glory and power.

When the messenger reached the capital city of this nation, he dismissed his followers and immediately hurried to the presence of the great King. The messenger was a nephew of this King, and since his boyhood had been in high favor with him, being placed in many positions of trust. He related the story of the strange nation he had found, to the King, and urged him to allow its subjugation to be commenced at once. He told of the great and fertile country they inhabited, of the large copper mines to the north, and the mica mines in the south. He told how this strong people might join with the southern tribes and overrun the country; in his eagerness he went so far as to represent the race as strong, valiant and warlike, possessed of great wealth and power. He made no mention of the real purposes he had in mind; these he kept carefully concealed, alleging only that the country should be conquered because of its strength in war, and the great wealth that could be obtained.

The great King heard the story with much surprise. The wonderful report of his nephew at once aroused the spirit of the conqueror

within him. Visions of still greater wealth, and of extended power and dominion, came before his eyes. Warfare was his delight; for that he had been trained from boyhood. He was quick to see that the strong nation to the north must be subdued, and he was more than willing that his nephew should undertake the task. He would furnish the warriors and everything necessary for the conquest, for a share in the immense wealth. Would not this be added wealth and power? Was not his nation invincible? Human life was of no value to him. Self-aggrandizement, a thirst for wealth and blood—these, inflamed by skillfully worded reports and flatteries, were the motives by which the great King was actuated. He was only a barbarian, and a heathen; civilized monarchs have committed as great crimes, for no greater purposes!

The messenger, whom we shall hereafter know as Inca, at once began preparations for the conquest. The story of the country to the north was related to the people, and a call was issued for warriors. The people were incited to war by every possible means, and as they were savage by nature and training, it was no great task to get together an immense number of warriors. Before many moons, Inca had all preparations for the conquest complete, and was ready to set forth with his savage band. Never before had he collected together such an army; there were

thousands of the strongest and fiercest warriors, veterans of many a tribal war, armed as never armed before. He looked over the immense assembly and smiled with satisfaction.

“The pale-faces of the North can not stand long before my warriors! Victory is mine! The fair-faced lily of the North will soon accompany me to the South! A few more moons and Inca will receive his reward.”

One beautiful, tropical morning the host turned northward and began the long march, which would end only when they reached the limits of Oko's kingdom. What a spectacle it was in the brilliant morning light! Thousands of dusky warriors, clothed only in breech-cloth and moccasins; their tawny skins shining in the sun; their long, black hair streaming down their backs; their eyes dark and filled with a sinister light—marching slowly and steadily over plain and hill, through forests and across open country. Their swords and smaller weapons glittered in the sunlight, their great bows were carried with seeming ease, and the quivers which hung suspended from their shoulders seemed to cause them no inconvenience. They marched, for the most part, in silence; now and then they raised a wild, weird chant to their heathen deities, or whooped and hallooed in glee. Then, again, all that could be heard was the heavy and subdued tramp of the multitude, the crack-

ling of leaves and brushwood underfoot, or a sharp word of command. It was, indeed, the war-host of a primitive nation.

There was, in the rear, no long baggage-train, to require attention and guarding, or to retard the progress of the host. The *impedimenta* of the Roman had no place among the savage tribes of the American continents. They subsisted on the earth and the fullness thereof. A small jar of pottery, suspended from the neck, contained rations of bruised corn—enough to last for many days. Each warrior also carried with him a quantity of the dried flesh of some animal: the rest they obtained as they proceeded. Spreading, as they did, over a vast extent of untrodden territory, filled with animal life, they were never in want of food. The early nations were not greatly perplexed by economic problems; their wants were few, their tastes simple; civilization had not yet brought its problems of supply and demand, which now engross so much attention. They were still children of nature; their Earth-mother still nurtured them.

When, after the long journey, they drew near the southern village, Inca ordered the army to halt, and, with a few of those who were with him when he first discovered the place, he entered the village. He at once visited the village chief, who received him with welcome. Inca informed him that he had been commissioned to

draw up a treaty with King Oko, and that he was now on the way to the capital. He was allowed to pass through the country unmolested, and after a few days started for Oko's village.

When he arrived there he forthwith gained audience with the treacherous Bodo; and together they proceeded to conclude the workings of their plot.

"Is there the least suspicion of danger among your people?" asked Inca. "Have you taken care to say nothing of this to any one?"

"There is no suspicion," answered Bodo. "I have whispered it to no one—not even to the leaves of the murmuring forest. I keep my own counsel; no one ever hears Bodo talk. Are you all prepared? Are your warriors here? There is much planning to do, and it must be done skillfully and well."

"The warriors are here. Far below the southern village they lie concealed in the bosom of the dark forests. They are silent now, and their weapons lie idle, but wait until the word is spoken and they will sweep all before them like the fearful hurricane! You say there is much to be done. Yes. Yes. We must plan everything now—at once—before we are suspected of treachery."

"Then," said Bodo, "we had better go through the making of the treaty at once, and I will meet

with you after this, and tell you what there is yet to be done."

The advice of Bodo was taken, and the pretended envoys were escorted to the council-chamber, where the forms of drawing up a solemn treaty were gone through with. Pledges were exchanged, those of Inca's nation being a sword and three small knives, delicately inlaid with gold. These were received with much pleasure by King Oko, who had them at once taken to his home and placed among his most prized possessions. How he admired those four glittering instruments of death! Given as symbols of good faith and peace, they were soon to fulfill their bloody mission! The sword is an emblem of war; it can not be made an emblem of peace!

After the band had been royally entertained for several days, by the inhabitants of the village, they started, as they said, for the city of the great King; they were to be accompanied again, a short distance, by Bodo. No sooner were they well away from the village, than the plotting continued.

"Before your warriors can meet with success, and before this nation can be subdued, a very dangerous task must be performed," said Bodo, to his savage companions. He then related to them the story of the small stone tablet: the place where it was kept, how it was guarded,

and the difficulty they would have in removing it, and getting it out of the way. The story mystified the hearers; they crouched on the ground around Bodo, and eagerly drank in all he had to say. They were filled with strange, superstitious dread, and their dark breasts heaved, and their strong frames trembled, as they heard of the mysterious powers accorded to the sacred stone.

"We must get that away to-night," continued Bodo. "I shall attempt to get it in my possession, and we must take it far away; you must accompany me, and your men must bury it deep down where I say. It is said to be a fearful thing to take the stone away, but such stories never troubled me. I fear nothing! Why do you fear? You say you are warriors, and yet you are trembling like our weakest women. Will you aid me, or do you fear the priestly stories?"

"It is fearful to touch things sacred to the gods," replied Inca. "It would mean death in my country. But if it is necessary, as you say, we will aid you. Let us hurry, and be done with the work."

Swiftly the canoes glided down the river, and soon Bodo turned his craft to the right and into the mouth of the small stream that led to the Great Serpent—the High Priest's sanctuary. The mounds and the long, extended trail of the

Serpent rose dark and threatening in the dim starlight. All was silent as death, save the soft sobbing of the summer wind among the heavy forest branches. Slowly and stealthily the dark forms crept from the stream-bank, up the slope and near to the sacred mound. Here, as commanded by Bodo, they lay in the grass, on the alert for danger. Bodo continued his slow, snake-like creeping to the mound. Soon it was reached, and with painful quietness he scaled its side, crept softly to the entrance and pushed the doors gently aside. He had never crossed the sacred portals; all that he knew of the shrine, he had heard from the priests, and now that he looked upon it for the first time, and saw the ghostly glare of the eternal fires, flickering in weird shadows on the walls, he was filled with vague alarm. The dark shadows seemed to him like the great beating wings of vampires, circling about his head. The mats spread on the floor, and the skins and furs suspended on the walls, wrought, as they were, with symbolic designs, looked threatening in the dim light. Great fear seized upon the man, and he came very near shrieking and rushing from the place. Then a sense of the danger he was in, and the consequences that would follow were he discovered, came to him, and he hastened to complete his task. Carefully lifting aside the curtains, he saw the small, white, oval disc lying before

him. He closed his eyes and mumbled a prayer as he grasped it! Thus it has always been: we find traitors, bandits and robbers mumbling prayers to their gods even as they are breaking their greatest commandments!

Arranging everything carefully as he had found it, Bodo crept out and away as silently as he had come. Just as the small band reached their canoes at the stream, the night guard passed along the crescent-shaped ridge. A moment earlier and he would have captured the traitor; as it was, he saw nothing but darkness; heard nothing, save the night wind!

"We must bury this where the greatest of our rulers, and the greatest of our High Priests, lie buried. It is a sacred mound; no one is allowed near it. It lies to the east; we can reach there and bury it before another day," said Bodo.

The canoes were turned up the river again, and the band silently traveled on. After several hours they landed, and proceeded eastward a short distance, until the dark form of a gigantic mound loomed up before them. It was the burial-place of a former great King, Queen and High Priest; it was a most sacred spot, yet the treacherous and intrepid Bodo did not hesitate to set profane feet upon it.

"Dig down here," he said to his companions.

For a long time nothing could be heard but the muffled sounds of the instruments as the

excavation sank deeper and deeper. A strange dread was upon the entire group; they were filled with unnatural fears, and none spoke a word. The work was, after awhile, completed, and before Bodo placed the sacred disc under the ground, all looked at it. A strange sight they made, standing there in the dim starlight, looking with solemn awe upon a tablet vested with supernatural power.

Bodo shuddered as he thought of the words of the priest—words he had heard when a mere lad, but words which now flashed before his mind, bright and clear. Do the lessons of our youth ever leave us? His was a dark, strange nature—perverted, we would say, in our latter-day wisdom. Yet terror caused doubtings to seize upon him. What if the priest were right? What if the terrible stories of punishment after death were true? What would the outraged Sun-god say to him, when he had to face him, in the next world?

“I am glad it is buried far down,” he said, as the last bit of earth was placed over it, and the sod carefully fitted down. “It is well that we have it removed.”

They dropped silently down the river again, and as the bright rays of the morning sun were gilding everything with golden light, the two men stood on the banks, engaged in earnest conversation.

"We must keep communicating with each other all the time," said Bodo, "and yet we must do it cautiously. You must return to your warriors, and in a few days begin your march northward. The alarm will soon spread throughout the nation. I shall feign great surprise, and say at once that we have been betrayed. The King will call for all his men to be collected together; they will be collected at the great forts. It will be best for them to collect here; then much fighting will not be necessary. I can turn the forts over to you during the night. Leave all things in my hands; keep messengers around your camps, at all times on the outlook for me. Like the birds of the night, I shall be flitting here and there, like a shadow. Oko will never dream of my treachery; everything is in my hands; we shall conquer all."

Inca looked at the dwarfed being before him, with awe. The fearful cunning, the great daring, the restless energy of the man, astonished him. Bodo exerted a strong influence over him, yet he knew that the strange creature was wholly in his power.

"It shall be as you say," replied Inca. "We shall be here before many days. Be ready for us. The soldiers of the great King will leave death and desolation behind them."

CHAPTER VI.

LIKE A WOLF ON THE FOLD.

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
The cries of agony, the endless groan,
Which, through the ages that have gone before us,
In long reverberations reach our own.

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

With what energy, with what foreth'ought, with what cunning skill, with what irresistible resolve, did Inca prosecute the enormous work he had planned! We are apt to underrate the workings of what we are pleased to call the savage, untutored mind. We measure all the men of the past too much by our modern standard. We should stop and ask ourselves: What is an untutored mind? Were the minds of the Assyrians and Chaldeans untutored? Were those of the Greeks and Romans untutored? By what standard shall we measure? Each generation, looking back on those past, calls them untutored. A slight step in advance along the highway of eternity, a few new theories formulated by human thought, and man considers himself far more cultured than was the host now slumbering in the bosom of Mother Earth. But is he? Can the human mind come nearer to solving the great problems of life and death than it could

twenty centuries ago? Is a man able to hate more, love more, fear more than in the centuries gone by? If not, why underrate the plannings and doings of primitive man? He was hampered only by living in a period, before mankind, by its multiplicity, had subdued the forces of nature. We must give the Roman as much credit for his empire-building as the Anglo-Saxon. The one empire is simply larger—we may say—in bulk. The quality of the mind has improved but little in its ability to grasp the Infinite. We still grope, as groped primitive man!

Inca had planned and carried on this great conquest with the ability of an Alexander. He had collected an army of warriors such as few monarchs have ever excelled in numbers and fierceness. He had commanded them with tact and sagacity; had led them over a vast extent of territory and brought them to the verge of a strange nation, without any murmurings on the part of the host. He had succeeded in gaining the confidence of one of the chiefest advisers of this nation, and had brought him entirely into his power. He had penetrated the very heart of the country and had stood in the presence of the King and Queen, and in the highest council-chamber, without so much as arousing the slightest suspicion or fear, on the part of rulers or people. What man has ever done more? What cunning, skill, daring, boldness, courage and

self-possession have ever been combined in one man, more than in this one? He is a leader, a conqueror, a man of great moment; and one of those whose influence has changed the destinies of nations.

When Inca reached his army, he told of the success of his plans, and exhorted them to prepare for the work of death and destruction before them. Standing out before them—tall, straight, impressive—he said:

“My warriors, the time draws nigh for us to fall upon the unsuspecting people of this nation. You who have taken part in many battles, will not fail me in this one. Like the lightning, which shivers the greatest trees of the forest, so we shall destroy this people. Prepare for battle, for to-morrow we start forth upon our northward march. I know that I can trust you, and that you will obey me.”

This was all. A short, terse, impressive speech. This has been a characteristic of the men of early times, and of those belonging to savage races. The ancient Greeks, in exhorting their men to battle, did it in few words. Demosthenes, the world's greatest orator, compressed his most forceful speeches into small compass. The secret of the telling oratory of our North American Indians was in its brevity. It is a mark of greatness. Language is full of meaning; it need not be prolix or flowery:

short, simple, plain words express thought most clearly, and the ancients of all nations knew this, and, knowing it, carried it out, in all instances.

As Inca ceased, a low murmur of approval arose from the warriors. It was an impressive sight to see the surging mass of dark forms standing in silence, listening to the words of their leader. The expression upon their faces showed clearly their thoughts: it spoke of unconquerable determination, repressed energy, terrible ferocity. The great knots of muscle stood out upon their tawny limbs, their breasts heaved with passion; they reminded one of a leash of savage bloodhounds tugging at their toils, eager to start forth upon the trail.

That night, as the army of warriors lay sleeping, Inca and his subordinate officers were arranging the details of their work. They withdrew a distance from the slumbering host, and, crouching down in the shade of the forest, talked earnestly. The bright moon rose over the scene, and looked down in calm grandeur upon the landscape. Ah, what a scene she looked upon! What scenes she has looked upon, and will look upon! If she could tell her story, what a narrative it would make! To-night, for the last time, she shone down upon the beauty of the quiet nation, that had so long worshiped her as the Priestess of the Sun-god. The morrow brought with it the beginnings of destruction.

Early the next morning, the inhabitants of the southern village, just starting out for the duties of the day, were alarmed by the sight of a large band of armed warriors drawing near them. They were recognized as being of the same race as the strangers who had lately visited them. The village chief, being informed, came hurrying to the edge of the village, and addressed the leader of the band. He was answered by a wave of a battle-ax, and a voice in the rear shouting to him to surrender. He recognized the voice of one of Inca's companions, on his recent visit, and called to him to hold a conference. For a short time they talked together.

"Will you surrender the village quietly, or shall we be compelled to attack you?" asked the man.

"The great Oko placed me in command of this village, to rule and protect its inhabitants. I can not surrender it."

"Then the warriors of the great King will fall upon it, and their weapons will cleave the heads of your people, and the green grass of the earth will be stained by your blood."

"It is better," said the village chief, "to die than to surrender to an enemy of King Oko. I promised by the great Sun-god to be faithful to the King, and my promise to him must never be broken."

The warrior turned, and, with a shout, motioned the band on to the slaughter. With wild, savage yells they poured forth from the forests. They rushed into the village, and fell upon the almost defenseless inhabitants with awful ferocity. They struggled nobly, but the terrible strength of the enemy, and the effectiveness of their weapons, overwhelmed them. Men, women and children were mercilessly cut down, only a few escaping northward. These were spared, that they might carry the news of the attack to the King. The village was plundered, and set on fire, and soon a blackened mass of ashes and heaps of charred forms were all that remained of it.

After this slaughter, Inca moved slowly northward with his warriors—slowly, because he wished the escaped fugitives to reach the large northern villages and spread the alarm, several days before he crossed the waters of the Holy River. As he advanced he destroyed everything that came in his path: small villages were blotted out, grain fields were trampled underfoot, everything of any service to the army was carried off, and only a dark lane of smoldering ashes and rotting corpses was behind. He was sweeping northward like a seething blast of flame.

Meanwhile, the few who had escaped from the village were hurrying to the presence of King Oko. Terror urged them onward, and in a few

days they drew near the capital. When they reached the village, without the great ceremony necessary to gain audience with Oko, they rushed into his council-chamber, in the midst of a solemn conclave. The guards turned upon them angrily; Oko and Bodo looked at them in utter surprise and astonishment, but all were alarmed when they noticed the appearance of the men. They seemed to be terribly frightened; they were torn by thorns and bruised by the roughness of the ways over which they had come so hurriedly. They were weak and hardly able to stand.

"Speak, and let us know what means this interruption," said Oko.

Hastily and almost incoherently, the men related the story of the bloody butchery. A hush fell over the assembly. It was the most solemn hush that had ever fallen over the council. The terrible import of the story made all utterly speechless. Oko controlled himself only with the greatest effort. Bodo feigned surprise and terror; he first broke the stillness.

"The treacherous savages have broken the sacred rites of our treaty," he said. "Oh, King Oko, thus have we been betrayed! Far better would it have been had we destroyed the traitors. We have been led away by the goodness of our hearts."

Oko turned his eyes upon his trusted adviser,

as if searching his face. He looked at him silently, for a few moments, and said:

"Bodo, you have been most faithful to me. In this matter, perhaps, I have consulted with you too little. I may have—it seems that I have—dealt too trustfully with the strangers. Already they are destroying our villages and killing our brethren. A dark future is before us. We must lift our hands against our enemies, and do what we have never been called upon to do before—spill human blood. Here, in our great council, we must deliberate for the safety of our people. While we are in the right, and lifting our hands only against an enemy, the great Sun-god will aid us in our battles. We must hasten to call forth our people from every part, and prepare for the struggle. What plan have you, Bodo, for the defense?"

"Oh, great King," replied the dwarf, "my counsel must avail but little. I fear so much for my nation, that I am hardly able to consult for her safety. Then, too, I arranged the treaty with the dark-faced traitors, and it has failed. Oh, I dare not attempt anything else. After such a failure, my counsels must prove useless. Take the advice of others."

"Courage! Courage! Bodo," said the King. "Your counsels have always been wise; much of the success of my reign is due to you. It is no fault of yours that we have been treacher-

ously betrayed. We are ready to hear your plans."

"Yes, yes, Bodo," said the men of the council, "you must give us your counsels, as of old. Your counsel is good."

With seeming reluctance, Bodo at last yielded to continue in his old place of trust. After the long deliberations of the council, he arose and said:

"Your plans all seem good to me. Our people must be called together from every quarter—men, women and children—and collected within our fortifications. Here we can defend ourselves for a long time—perhaps for so long that our enemies will leave our country. Collect them within our fortifications; it is our only hope."

And so it was decided. The inhabitants of the entire region were to be called together, and placed behind the great, strong earthen walls. It did seem a good, safe plan to all, and especially so to Bodo, who, after the King and all the councilors had left, chuckled to himself:

"A good plan! A good plan! Collect them within the fortifications—yes, yes! And Bodo is still trusted, and is a good councilor. Well, so he is, but he keeps his own counsel!"

And the dwarfed creature passed out of the council-chamber, into the fast-deepening dusk, to continue his deliberations for the safety of the nation!

CHAPTER VII.

THE GATHERING TOGETHER.

The combat deepens! On, ye brave!
Who rush to glory, or the grave!

.

Ah! few shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulcher!

—CAMPBELL.

Messengers were sent in every direction to summon the people to the defense of their nation. Some traveled on foot to remote inland villages, while others drove their canoes along the waters of many different streams. Great danger-signals were kept burning on the summits of the loftiest mounds to attract the attention of the inhabitants, and to guide their movements. The lurid glare of the fires could be seen for many miles, and it was not unnoticed by Inca, who was now encamped but a short distance below the Holy River.

"It is their signal-fire," he said; "they are gathering together only to be destroyed."

While his subjects were being summoned, Oko hastened to the sanctuary of Gilgo, to obtain the advice of the aged Priest. He found him already in possession of a knowledge of the

worst, and earnestly praying for deliverance from the hands of the oppressor.

"The danger is great," said Oko. "The enemy can not now be far distant. I have caused our people to be gathered together in the great fortifications, where we can, at least, defend ourselves for a long time. I have come to consult with you in regard to the sacred tablets and the eternal fires. How are these to be kept out of the hands of the enemy? Would it not be best to conceal the tablets, and to remove the sacred fires far from here, where you can guard them in safety?"

"No, no!" promptly replied the old Priest. "These holy things must never leave the sanctuary of the Sun-god. I have no great fear. While the prophetic tablets are in place, the nation is safe. True, the danger seems great and threatening, but we have strong fortifications, our men will fight valiantly, and the right is on our side. No! great King, I shall stay at my post, and perform my duty. The enemy know nothing of this place; it is in a lonely region, and it is a long distance from the fortifications. They will not find it. I shall do my duty here; see that all others do their duty elsewhere."

It was useless to urge Gilgo. He realized the imminent danger thoroughly, but he knew that his duty was where all the teachings of his life

pointed the most important place in the nation to be. Was not the very life of the nation there in his keeping? So the old Priest thought, and he was determined to lay down his life before deserting his post of duty.

Oko returned to his capital with a sorrowful heart. He felt that Gilgo was staying at his sanctuary only to be sacrificed to the fury of the bloodthirsty enemy. He wandered out, that evening, to the gently rising slope of the encircling embankment of the village, to quiet the fever in his brain, and to take a last look out over the beautiful village, which he must soon leave to take command of his warriors, gathered together within the fortifications. He had not gone far before he met Bodo, who had been skulking about, revolving treacherous plans in his mind.

"Well, Bodo, it grieves my heart sorely to look out over the quiet village, here, and to think that it may soon be laid waste, and my people destroyed by the merciless savages, who are already drawing near," said Oko, sadly.

"The messengers have almost all returned," Bodo said hastily, "and by to-morrow the people will arrive from every quarter. Then we can commence a fierce resistance. Did you see the High Priest to-day?" and at this Bodo watched the King narrowly.

"Yes, Bodo, I saw the holy Gilgo. I told him how dangerous it is for him to remain at his sanctuary, keeping the sacred tablets and the eternal fires. The enemy may discover the place any day, and remove these things, on which the very life of our nation depends. But the brave old Priest will not leave his post; if all my subjects prove as brave as he, we may yet drive the enemy from our land."

"Yes, it is very dangerous for him to stay there, running the risk of death and of losing the sacred tablets," answered Bodo; then he inwardly said:

"The old Priest has not yet missed the small tablet. He will, of course, stay until he discovers the loss of this."

"Probably we had better place a strong guard around the sanctuary," continued Bodo; "it could at least ward off an attack of the enemy, until a larger force arrived." He was determined to remove from the mind of the King, every cause for suspicion against him.

"Oh, no!" said Oko, "it is strictly forbidden to guard the sanctuary with a large force. Gilgo would never permit this. Then, too, the presence of a large body of men would only attract the attention of any spies of the enemy. If Gilgo will not remove the sacred things, it is better for him to remain there as he always has.

We must do our best to draw the attention of the enemy elsewhere."

"That is a wise plan," agreed Bodo; "the holy Priest is indeed brave."

"And he will do much for us, Bodo. He will invoke the power of the great Sun-god against the enemy. His bravery will inspire us. But now we must part; the night grows late, and to-morrow we must lead the people of our village to the fortifications. Be brave, Bodo; be brave and strong! Right is with us!"

"Yes, great King, right is with us," echoed the dwarf.

The next day the subjects of the King began gathering together within the walls of the great fortification, a few miles west of the Serpent Mound. For days the forests poured a flood of human beings into the extensive area, enclosed by the walls. Rude, bark wigwams were hastily constructed within the walls, to shelter the women and children. Provisions, weapons, and as much valuable property as could be carried, were gathered here. A heavy, armed guard was constantly on duty and a close outlook was kept for the enemy. In a few days the entire population had gathered in and around the fort.

Every move was closely watched by Inca and his spies, while Bodo kept in daily communication with him. It was agreed that there should

be no attack until all was reported in readiness by Bodo.

Oko assembled every man of sufficient age and strength, and began training them for warfare. He had no precedent by which to be guided, but he proved to be a wonderful leader. Before many days had passed, he had an army in readiness for battle that proved formidable to the enemy.

Bodo soon informed Inca that the time had come to make a preliminary attack against the fort, and in a few days Oko's spies, returning, announced that the dusky warriors had crossed the river, and were moving rapidly northward. Oko, by his own courage and self-possession, inspired all around him, and the large assembly of warriors anxiously but bravely awaited the appearance of the enemy.

Feeling certain that Oko would be easily overwhelmed, Inca had crossed the river with but a portion of his warriors. As he emerged from the forests within sight of the great bulk of Oko's warriors, lying encamped just across the river from the fort, he expected the entire army to flee in terror before him. But this was not the case. Instead, they presented a decidedly hostile appearance, and at the slightest move on his part to advance, they let fly a cloud of arrows, some of which did terrible execution. Enraged at this, Inca commanded an onset.

Then, for the first time, Oko led men of his nation on to battle. And they fought boldly, courageously, brutally. With their strong bows they drove death-dealing arrows against the southern warriors; their stone axes cleaved the head of many a veteran warrior, while their strength was equal in every particular to that of their enemy.

While the warriors under Inca had their bronze swords, with which they could have done bloody work, so fierce was the resistance of Oko's army that they could not draw near enough to do great execution with them. The conflict raged for several hours, stopping only when the southern warriors fled before a series of terrible onslaughts. Oko left many brave and mangled warriors on the field, but he felt that he had struck terror into the enemy and gained fresh courage.

That night Bodo stole softly from the fort, and hastened to where Inca had encamped, after the defeat of the day. Inca was both chagrined and angry.

"I thought your countrymen would offer little resistance," he said, "and it seems that they are going to fight with greater fury than I have ever seen. And you have vast numbers of such warriors behind those strong walls! Was it for this that you deceived me into allowing you to gather together such a host? Have you been

false to me? Speak! Speak!" and he seized Bodo fiercely.

"No, no!" shouted the dwarf. "I did not dream they would resist so savagely. But I think I know why they are so brave and bold."

"Speak out, then! Tell me quickly," said Inca.

"The great Priest does not yet know of the removal of the sacred tablet, and he is urging the warriors on. When he learns of its removal he will lose courage. We have bloodier work to do, still. We must destroy the great Priest," answered Bodo.

"Destroy the great Priest!" shouted Inca.

"Yes, yes!" said the dwarf; "while he lives my countrymen will fight fiercely. It is a terrible thing, but it must be done. Have a strong body of warriors to go with me to-morrow night, and the great Priest shall be removed."

Inca consented to this, and the traitor disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PASSING OF THE BRAVE.

Sons of the brave! delay no more;
The spirits of my kindred call;
'Tis but one pang, and all is o'er!
Oh! bid the aged cedar fall!
To join the brethren of his prime,
The mighty of departed time.

—MRS. HEMANS.

On the following day, both armies remained quiet. Oko did not wish to follow up the enemy, and thus draw away from the fort. For the present, his desire was simply to ward off all attempted attacks. Inca's warriors were disheartened by the defeat inflicted upon them, and the savage fury with which the northern warriors fought. Inca himself was filled with superstitious fear by the accounts given him by Bodo, of the holy things which inspired the people to such courage. He did not dare to renew the contest until the High Priest was dead, and the sacred things carried beyond the reach of the people.

As soon as deep dusk had fallen, Bodo stole softly from the dark shadows of the fort-walls, and hastened to his canoe, which was idly tossing on the surface of the gently flowing river. Stepping lightly into this, he loosed it from its moorings, and with a few strong dips of his

oar was gliding swiftly down the stream, toward the encamped host of Inca.

When he reached it he found Inca impatiently awaiting him, with a band armed and ready to start for the High Priest's sanctuary at once. They traveled in silence, for all of them felt depressed by a great fear: they felt that they were about to commit a crime against the gods. Yet this did not divert them from their undertaking. In all ages men have outraged their gods. Did not Belshazzar profane the holy utensils? Did not Israel crucify her prophet and the Saviour of the world? Are there not those, to-day, who, knowing the commandments of God, nevertheless trample them under their feet? Is the man of twenty centuries ago to be censured more than the man of the present? The men of the early ages never heard the doctrine of Redeeming Love and Infinite Mercy. Their sins are not equal to the sins of mankind to-day.

As the canoes were being silently moored under the shadow of the precipice on which the sanctuary was located, Bodo was whispering instructions to the warriors with him:

"I shall enter the holy shrine, and after securing the tablet that is remaining there, shall steal forth and slay the High Priest. You remain here and keep a careful watch. Should the guards discover you before I return, do not hesitate to slay them. If they do not disturb you,

wait until I return and then we can complete our work of destruction."

For the second time the strange creature began a stealthy approach to the High Priest's sanctuary. He felt less frightened than he did the first time. He had been playing the traitor now for so long, that it had become a habit to him, and his active mind was engaged only with nefarious plottings. As he pushed the door of the shrine aside, the glare of the eternal fires fell upon him. He paused a moment. Everything before him was silent. The room looked just as it did the first time he entered it. There was the same dim light flickering on the walls—the same ghostly look to everything near him. On a couch to the right, lay the old Priest, quietly slumbering—oblivious to all danger.

As softly and silently as a tiger, Bodo crept to the curtains, parted them, and disappeared behind them. All behind them was intensely dark, and when he parted the second pair of curtains, he found it extremely difficult to find the location of the altar on which the tablet rested. As he groped in the darkness, he made a slight noise. Instantly the old Priest rose on his elbow, and listened intently. The noise continued. He crept lightly from his couch and made his way to the curtains. Yes, just as he thought, he heard footsteps within, and knew

that some one was attempting to carry off the sacred tablets.

At once a plan flashed across Gilgo's mind: he would draw back into the shadows, and wait until the intruder should come forth; then he would spring upon him, and cry to the guards for aid. Soon he heard a groping for the folds of the curtains, and the next instant the form of a man emerged and started for the couch. With a bound, Gilgo sprang upon him. Bodo uttered a low cry of surprise, and struggled fiercely. Though small in stature, his dwarfed limbs had immense strength, and the infirm Priest was no match for him. At the first low cry for help, uttered by Gilgo, the fingers of Bodo seized his throat with a grip of steel. As he did this the flare of the fires fell full upon his face, and the Priest recognized him. With a gurgle of horror and astonishment, he gasped:

"You, Bodo, you! Oh, villainous traitor!"

This was all. Bodo's grip tightened on the Priest's throat, and was not relaxed until he lay limp and lifeless by his couch.

"Lie there, wretch," hissed Bodo. "You can not thwart my plans, though you steal upon me in the darkness, and have the power of the Sun-god behind you. No, no! Bodo can not be thwarted. He has overcome the Priest and the God, and the King will soon be as they are!"

It was a ghastly sight to look upon. There lay the prostrate form of the holy Priest; bending over him, the dwarfed, powerful figure of Bodo, his eyes gleaming with a murderous light; looking down upon them, the strange representations of the Sun-god; over all, the flickering, dim, ghostly light of the eternal fires. Ah! where are the painters who can depict the awful reality of the scene? What meaning they would have to put into it! It was a scene full of the most solemn importance. In the most sacred sanctuary of a nation, lay the last and greatest of her priests—a sacrifice to unholy greed and treachery. Bending over him, one of the most trusted officers of the nation; one who had been reared under the influence of the very religion which he was now attempting to destroy. Lighting up all, the gleam of the fires which for ages had been burning. An awful tableau! The murder of a High Priest; the profaning of a holy shrine; the destruction of a religion! There have been few more terrible scenes in the world's history.

With one last, glaring look at the fallen Priest, Bodo left the shrine and hastened to the little band, uneasily awaiting him.

"I have killed the Priest, and brought the tablet with me," he said, briefly. Handing the tablet to one of the warriors, he continued:

“Carry this away to the east, a few hours’ journey. There you will find many mounds. Bury it in one of them and hasten back.”

The warrior took the small, engraven stone, and disappeared with it into the darkness. It was the last of the ancient prophecies!

“Now for the guards and the young men who are studying here. Not one of them must escape!” whispered Bodo.

The company crept around in the deep darkness, and as each guard appeared, slowly traversing his beat, he was quickly dispatched with one blow of a keen sword. So quietly was this done, that the twenty guards were slain, each unconscious of the other’s fate.

The little village that sheltered the youthful students of the religion, was then surrounded, and, with wild yells, the warriors rushed upon it. All, springing up from their sleep, were ruthlessly cut down. Then the village was fired, and in a few hours all that remained of it was a heap of smouldering ashes.

The murderous band returned as quietly as it came, and when morning dawned again, Bodo was at the fort, as keen, alert and cunning as ever! No one dreamed of the bloody work in which he had participated during the night!

Late that afternoon, Oko summoned Bodo across the river to his camp. The King was greatly troubled:

"Several days ago our priests sent a messenger to Gilgo, to obtain some advice in regard to some of our rites and sacrifices. The messenger has not yet returned. We fear that he has fallen into the hands of the enemy, or that the sanctuary has been destroyed and the holy Gilgo killed. I wish you to accompany one of our great priests to the shrine. Choose such a guard as you wish and set forth at once."

"Very well, great King, it shall be as you command," responded Bodo.

As the forces of the enemy were encamped to the south, it was necessary for Bodo and his party to travel overland to the Great Serpent, and the journey required several days. As they drew near the shrine, and saw no signs of life, the priest became anxious.

"I fear the worst, Bodo," he exclaimed. "I am afraid to approach the shrine. What calamities will befall us if the holy things are gone!"

The priest had good reason to tremble, for, as they were approaching the mound, he stumbled over the decaying form of a guard. With a loud cry of fear, he sprang back.

"See! Bodo, see! The guards have been killed," he said.

"Horrible!" exclaimed Bodo.

When they reached the top of the mound, the

priest cast his eyes toward the village, and saw the blackened ashes where it had stood.

"I fear to enter the shrine," said the priest. "The curse of the god will surely fall upon us."

"But we must enter," answered Bodo, in a strained voice. "The savages know nothing of the importance of the holy things, and we may yet save them."

"That is true," said the priest; "we must enter."

Pushing the door aside, the priest stepped within. With a shriek of horror, he fled from the door, and down the slope of the mound. Bodo looked within. There lay the bloated, swollen form of Gilgo, just where he had strangled him. A second glance almost froze the blood within his veins. The eternal fires were out!

CHAPTER IX.

DUST TO DUST.

ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις, ὅτι τῇδε κείμεθα, τοῖς
κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

(Oh, stranger, tell the Lacedæmonians that we lie here
obedient to their commands!)

—Inscription on the tablet erected at Thermopylæ.

For a moment Bodo stood riveted to the spot. During the entire course of his villainy, the enormity of his crimes had never flashed upon him as it now did. A strange, weak sensation passed over him as he thought of the terrible consequences that would follow the extinguishing of the eternal fires. All the stories and prophecies of the priests came back to him; he shuddered and turned from the horrible scene, faint at heart. The bloated face of the dead Priest haunted him. It was the first sensation of terror that wholly took possession of him; but it was not the last!

Making his way slowly to the dejected group at the foot of the mound, he addressed the priest:

"Holy sir, what shall we do with the dead body of Gilgo? We can not leave the body of so great and holy a priest unburied."

"No, indeed, the great Gilgo must be buried with the observance of every rite, which he so

zealously taught us during his lifetime. But I can not conduct the ceremonies of his burial; my rank is not sufficiently high for that. We must hasten to the fort with the awful news, and bring hither the priests whose duty it is to attend to the burial of the great High Priest. How horrible it is to leave Gilgo's body here to decay until then, but it is all that we can do. May curses descend upon the heads of his murderers! May the great Sun-god punish them with everlasting punishments!"

Bodo shuddered as he listened to the anathemas which the priest was calling down upon him. It was with difficulty that he controlled himself; but everything was in his favor. The confusion and terror that had seized upon him were taken by his companions as indications of the grief and fear he felt, because of Gilgo's death, and the profaning of the sanctuary.

Sadly the little company betook itself back to the great fort, and related the story of the awful crime. It almost paralyzed the host. But little was said, though it was evident from the dejected looks everywhere seen, that despair had taken possession of every heart. The priests chanted weird dirges and muttered prayers for the dead Gilgo and the safety of the nation. Oko maintained his composure. The calmness of despair sustained him. He addressed the com-

pany of priests which were delegated to perform the last rites over the dead Priest.

“Holy men,” he said, “the blackness of night settles around us on every side. The enemy press fiercely upon us; the prophecies of our god are taken from us. In the profaned sanctuary of our nation lies the dead body of the greatest of our High Priests. He died at his post, nobly doing his utmost for the safety of his children. We must bury his body with all the honor that is due him, and chant sacred dirges for the repose of his great spirit. Bury him there, where he died: he is doubtless the last High Priest that will preside over the sacred shrine; bury him then amid the glories of the holy place. O Gilgo, would that I could help lay thy sacred form away! But it is impossible: I must die at my post, even as you died at yours! Hasten away, holy men, hasten away! Before many days your presence will be needed here.”

The solemn procession hastened through the forests on its way to the Great Serpent, chanting the wild death-chants of the religion. They carried great, flaming torches, both by night and by day, which were borne by the priests of the lower orders. The priests of the higher orders led the way, silently, uttering no word save the morning praise to the sun. It was a strange, a sorrowful, a devoted band that passed through the unbroken forest.

When they reached the sanctuary, they prepared the grave for the dead Priest's body, and waited for the sunrise hour to lay him to rest. The burial services were strikingly solemn and unique, and were carried out with more than usual dignity and ceremony. And it was well that they were, for this was the last religious rite ever enacted on the mound that had for centuries been the seat of religious rites!

As the first tinges of the crimson dawn began to color the eastern heavens, the priests assembled on the mound at the Serpent's tail, and offered the usual praise-service to the rising sun. Then they arranged themselves in parallel columns, the priests of the higher orders composing the two inner lines, and those of the lower orders the two outer lines. The priests were arrayed in their coarse, curiously woven cloaks, which covered their entire bodies. The cloaks belonging to the higher orders of priests were covered with great tassels, which marked the superiority of their position. The men composing the inner lines bore in their hands bowls of flaming oil, which were held high over their heads. The outer lines bore torches, carried in one hand, and held aloft. Starting from the tail of the great effigy mound, they traversed its entire length with the slow, measured tread of the priestly order, all the while uttering death-chants or the wild, weird dirges addressed to

the Sun-god. Back and forth, three times they marched, then ascended the oval mound, and entered the sanctuary where lay Gilgo's dead, decaying body.

Carefully removing it, to the mound near the Serpent's tail, the priests of the higher orders placed it in the grave they had prepared. Arranging themselves about the grave, they offered prayers for the spirit of the great High Priest. Then each of the priests cast a handful of earth over the body, and the attendants were summoned to complete the burial, and to lay away the bodies of those of the guards which could be found. When all had been finished, the flaming bowls of oil were arranged about the graves, and the assembly of priests remained chanting and praying until the fires burned low. Then the leader of the procession stepped forth, and, lifting his hands to the heavens, exclaimed:

"Oh, thou great Sun-god! Years ago you gave unto thy people this noble and holy Priest, the good Gilgo. For many moons he has been with us here, teaching thy people the way of right and truth. In all ways he did his duty, and died in caring for thy holy things. His life was good and pure, and we, his pupils and followers, know that his deeds bore fruit on earth. The eternal fires have returned unto thee, and we feel that with them returned the spirit of our noble Gilgo. As the smoke of these sacrificial

fires rises heavenward, grant that our prayers may also rise. Hear us, and take unto thyself the spirit of our great High Priest!"

That was all. The flames flickered, flickered again, and went out. The sun was high in the heavens; the birds sang in all the vast forest around; again the chanting of the priests burst forth, and save for these sounds, all was still. After a few hours the dark-robed procession descended from the mound, prostrated themselves at its base, uttered a last prayer, and disappeared in the forest.

Gilgo was buried! His great, noble life had gone out, and he alone, of all the number of High Priests who had presided over the sanctuary, was buried within its precincts. History can show no grander figure. His life was earnest, noble and sincere. He was true to the religion which had been taught to him, and by the example of his life lifted many to the higher heights. Where Duty commanded, thither he followed. In any age of the world he would have been a conspicuous figure. For centuries his body lay where it was buried, and not until the nineteenth century was his grave opened, and profane hands laid upon his moldering bones. They now lie within the walls of a modern museum, gazed upon wonderingly by the people of the present. But no matter! no matter! His reward is awaiting him! At the blast of the

great Archangel's trumpet, that is to gather the dead from the four quarters of the globe, the faithful Gilgo will cast aside the black robes of his priestly order, and receive the garments of dazzling white that clothe the worthy children of the most high God!

CHAPTER X.

“GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!”

Ye who believe in affection that hopes and endures and is patient,

Ye who believe in the beauty and strength of woman's devotion,

List to the mournful tradition, still sung by the pines of the forest.

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

After the burial of Gilgo, the hope that had been inspired by the victory over Inca's warriors turned to despair. The black-robed priests kept sacrificial fires burning night and day, and chanted their solemn dirges dismally. The promises of their god had been taken from them, and they felt that the inevitable curse would soon fall upon them.

Oko, alone, of all the host, cherished a faint hope that their cruel enemies might yet be driven from the land, and the Sun-god appeased by long-continued sacrifice. He felt that they had done nothing to arouse the wrath of the god. Had they not always obeyed the laws he had given them, through the priests? Had not all things sacred to him been zealously guarded for ages; and had not the aged Gilgo died in defense of them? Surely he would be with them yet.

The beautiful and noble Gurda also cherished the same hope, and by her brave counsel did

much to sustain the courage of Oko and his warriors. She moved among the occupants of that great fortification, bestowing words of faith and hope, that called down many a benediction upon her head.

"May the great god bless the noble Gurda," said the priests; "her trusting faith sustains our faltering hearts."

Bodo's failing courage had by this time revived, and he was everywhere present, encouraging and advising. He had consulted many times, since the burial of Gilgo, with Inca.

"All will be in readiness in a few days," he said at their last parting. "I shall soon deliver the beautiful Gurda into your hands, and give you the victory over the warriors of Oko. Only give Bodo his time, and he will deceive the eyes of the god himself!"

"Do not delay long," was Inca's answer; "already we have lingered here long, and my warriors are growing restless! Hasten your plans!"

"All will be well! Before many moons, the everlasting stillness will brood over the forests," and Bodo's form was lost in the gathering dusk.

Oko, meanwhile, realizing that a crisis would soon come, made a last visit to the fort to take counsel with Bodo and Gurda, and to receive the last instructions from the priests there.

After the close of the council meeting, in company with Gurda he strolled to the summit

of the lofty western embankment of the fort, and together they sat down, with faces toward the setting sun. It was a wondrous scene they looked upon. The last glorious rays of the summer sun were tingeing the western heavens with a flood of color; the great banks of clouds were crimson and purple and golden; the mellow light fell soft and subdued over the green forests. Below, and not far from the fort, flowed the waters of a tributary stream of the Holy River. The hum of the encamped multitude fell softly on their ears. But the beauty of the scene was unnoticed by the royal pair—the sounds of the multitude fell upon deaf ears. They were engrossed with other thoughts.

“My dear Gurda,” said Oko, “my beautiful, noble Gurda, it may be that we are together to-day for the last time. A strange fear has taken possession of me—a fear that all will be lost. I dreamed last night—a fearful, fearful dream. I dreamed that great clouds overspread the dazzling face of the Sun-god, and a deep darkness fell over all the land. I heard the cries and shrieks of a vast multitude, and after all grew silent, I saw a bright fire blaze up and light all the surrounding country. By the brilliant light of the blazing fire, I saw standing by, the black-robed form of Gilgo, closing his eyes on the dreadful scene, and shrieking: ‘The prophecies of the great Sun-god are being ful-

filled; I see the destruction of my people, and hear their cries of agony. They—the innocent—will perish, but the guilty shall also perish from the earth before many moons, and terrible shall be their punishment!" "

"Let not such strange visions disturb you," said Gurda, softly stroking the fevered forehead of the weary King. "You are only worried by the awful events of the days just past. Success may yet be ours. The savage warriors have already fled before our brave men, and I doubt not that they will hesitate to attack us again, openly. Do not despair, Oko, do not despair!"

"And yet," replied the King, "this fear takes hold upon me greatly. The priests themselves are trembling, and say their sacrifices point to destruction. Yet what can be done? There is nothing left but to struggle against the inevitable. As Gilgo died at his post, so must I die at mine. Great sorrow rests upon me, when I think that the fate of all these people lies in my hands. My spirit is troubled; my body weak."

"My dear Oko, your burden is too heavy for you to bear alone. It is not right that I remain here, while you are away with your warriors. I must go with you, and be at your side in this dark hour."

"You, Gurda, you! May the great god forbid that I take you from here, and expose you to the terrible dangers which I daily encounter.

That is not for you. Here behind the strong walls you can invoke the mercy of the god, and cheer us on, but you must not go with me."

"Yet why? Why? Was it not for this that I was given unto you, to cheer and comfort and strengthen you? To be at your side during every danger? Why should I remain here, idly sitting by, while you are encountering great perils? A woman's duty, my brave Oko, is by her lord's side. I shall go with you."

"It must not be so, my noble Gurda! During the time that we have been together, you have been a true and faithful wife; you were ever by me in sickness and trouble, your smile has always cheered my fainting heart. You are dearer to me than my life, and I can not allow you to fall a victim to the cruelty of these merciless savages. You must remain, Gurda, you must remain!"

"Do not command me to remain, my lord!" entreated Gurda, falling on her knees, beside him. "I am willing to die at your side. Oh, my dear Oko, do not say that I must remain!" and the noble Queen burst into tears.

"As you say, Gurda, as you say! The great god knows that my heart is stronger when you are at my side. And yet it is fearful to expose you to the dangers. It tries the hearts of our bravest men, and you are only a tender flower!"

"But my spirit is strong, Oko, my spirit is

strong. I have been at your side for many moons, my lord; I must not stay away now. To-morrow night I shall join you in your camp."

A silence fell upon the royal lovers—lovers still, though they had long been companions. Thoughts came crowding in upon them, thick and fast: thoughts of those youthful days when, hand in hand, they strolled beneath the soft light of the moon, by the gentle river; thoughts of that lovely day when the holy Gilgo had joined their lives together, and they had sworn to be true unto death; thoughts of the days of joy and love that had passed since then, days full of labor and duty, yet happy withal; and then crowded in upon them the present, with its stern realities. The sun had sunk behind the forest, long since; the sky was growing somber, the wind moaned through the branches. Within the walls all was growing quiet; the smoke of the sacred fires rose upward slowly; the dismal wailing of the priests reached their ears.

"I must go, Gurda, I must go! My warriors are awaiting me. Farewell, until we meet again," and Oko pressed her fondly to his bosom.

"Farewell! my noble Oko, farewell! To-morrow night I join you to part from you no more!"

He was gone! Gurda stood for a long time in the semi-darkness, watching after his retreating form. A great yearning came over her to follow after him in the night. Her loving,

trustful heart beat only for him. Without him life had no meaning.

Oh, the depths of a woman's heart! Who can measure them? In all the world there is nothing like the love of a pure and noble woman; it knows no limits, no bounds. The love of a sweet and trusting woman is slow to assert itself; she feels within her the throbbing pulse beating swiftly under its divine influence; she longs to unfold her heart, yet fears, fears—and she smothers her emotions within her palpitating bosom. Abiding love is a plant of slow growth, and its petals unfold almost imperceptibly. Long and silently does the woman study the object of her affections; doubtings and perplexities take possession of her soul, misgivings seize upon her. Yet through it all the softened light burning far back in the calm, clear depths of her trusting eyes, betokens the gathering strength of her faith. Coyly and half reluctantly does she surrender to her Prince of Love; yet all that she is in this world, all that she hopes to be in the next, goes with this surrender! True love calls for absolute and unreserved soul-surrender; this, woman gives, or she gives nothing at all. She can not deceive the promptings of her nature; she can not lavish affection, and bestow tender glances here and there! Her love awakens and kindles but once, and for but one. And it is unshaken and abiding through the vicissitudes

of every trouble. Joy only enlarges and refines it; sorrow only makes it more trusting and enduring; affliction only makes it cling closer to its beloved object, while death makes it only a beacon-star, guiding us onward to brighter worlds! Blessed be this relic of Eden, in a sinful and sorrowful world!

One by one the stars came forth, twinkling and scintillating in the spacious firmament. Gurda gazed upon them, reverently; they seemed to her like glorious promises of everlasting hope! How quietly they shone down upon her; how tranquil and serene they twinkled on! Softly she breathed a prayer to them—a prayer for the strengthening of her faith, and the safety of her country.

Ah, Gurda, gaze on! Pray on! The stars are shining upon thee to-night, for the last time, safe and trusting among thine own people. To-morrow night, and this twinkling host shall see thee here no more forever!

Sadly she turned from the spot, and started down the slope. Passing slowly along within the shadows, she came face to face with Bodo.

“Ha, my good Queen! Why are you walking forth at such an hour?” he asked in surprise.

“I have just left Oko,” she answered, “and he fears the worst. He has had a fearful dream, that has disheartened both him and the priests. The priests also report that the late sacrifices

are unfavorable, and that everything points to destruction. I am still hoping for the best; would that I were not hoping in vain! To-morrow I join Oko."

"Join Oko! Join Oko! Oh, good Queen, what madness has seized upon you?"

"No madness at all, Bodo. There is where duty calls me—to the King's side. Here I am of no service at all; there, I can at least cheer on Oko's faltering courage."

"But this is terrible, my Queen, terrible! Think what dangers you will encounter. It is no place for you to go. Your place is here, within the fortifications. Do not go, my Queen, do not go! I entreat thee, do not go!"

"Do not entreat me, Bodo. My mind is made up, and to-morrow night I join the King," responded Gurda, passing slowly on.

"To-morrow night! To-morrow night!" echoed the dwarf, turning in the opposite direction. Later he could have been seen stealing away from the fortifications, and hastening southward!

The next morning dawned bright and clear. The birds were singing in joyful choruses throughout the forests; the chants of the priests were borne aloft by the blue, curling smoke of the holy fires; everything was calm, peaceful, quiet. Gazing out over the fair scene, and up to the blue dome of the heavens, and around the

horizon, bordered with a gray, diaphanous haze, the priests forgot the wrath of the god, and hope welled up again within their breasts. How is it that a fair, bright morning can cause us to forget our deepest sorrows, for the while? What wondrous spell is this that nature flings about us? Looking over the beauteous landscape, listening to the glad bird-songs, feeling the delicious breezes fan our faces, and hearing them sighing through the treetops, our souls are filled with a spark of celestial glory, and life and death seem robbed of half their terrors. We live too far from Nature. We should drink in all the glories that she spreads before us, and live close to her heart, for her charms never grow old, and never fade!

The beauty of the morning slowly faded, and its genial warmth grew into the burning heat of noonday. Quiet still! Where are the savage warriors of the south? For days now, they have not been seen. Can it be that they have departed? Fear subsides, hope grows stronger. The guards pace dreamily along the high walls of the fort. The children gambol gayly over their sloping banks, and merry peals of laughter break the noontide stillness. Gay, thoughtless, happy! Thus were the inhabitants of doomed Pompeii, a few hours before the burst of ashes and flame buried them, to repose in silence, for ages!

As the sun passed the meridian, and began to slant the shadows from the west, Bodo passed along and came to Gurda's tent. He motioned to her, guardedly, and when she approached him, he said:

“My Queen, I wish to consult with you in regard to a very grave matter. It is a matter that concerns the safety of our nation. Let us pass without the walls, where we can talk unnoticed by the multitude.”

Wonderingly, Gurda followed him, out one of the great entrances to the fort, under the shadows of lofty trees, and into the dense forest shades. When they had seated themselves beneath a majestic oak, Bodo began speaking:

“Noble Queen, our cause is growing hopeless. The warriors of the enemy, numberless as the leaves of the trees, are swarming upon us. My trusted spies have been among them, and learn that they will fall upon this fort in the night, and destroy all within it. Already they are near to Oko and his warriors, not far from here. It is useless to contend against them longer.”

With a scornful look, Gurda turned upon him:

“Who are you, speaking thus?” she said. “Are you the adviser of the great Oko, second only to him in power, since the death of Gilgo? Are you the one who has been advising the very course which we are now following out? Do you

forget your duty? Have you forgotten the death of the faithful Gilgo? Let me hear no more of this!"

"Be careful! Be careful, my Queen! I know the danger far better than you. I know just how it is. There is absolutely no hope, and we must all perish, if we remain here. But I do not care to die in a hopeless cause. I have done my best to save the nation, but now that everything points to its destruction, I am not going to die with it. I have treated with Inca; he has promised me life and position, and I have joined him!"

For an instant the eyes of the Queen almost started from their sockets; she trembled violently, and almost lost possession of her senses. Then she turned fiercely upon the traitor:

"Was it for this that we placed our confidence in you, infamous traitor! You, who for years have owed all that you are to the favor of the noble Oko! And thus you have requited him! You have betrayed your nation and your King! Be gone from my sight! Be gone!" and she motioned him away.

"Oh, no, I shall not go!" replied Bodo; "though you call me a traitor, I still have a noble spot within my heart. The whole nation will perish, and you would perish with it, were it not that I have arranged to save you. Ha! my dear

Queen, does not that appeal to you? To be saved, and still live on?"

"And will you save Oko also?" she asked eagerly.

"Oh, no! to be sure, Oko can not be saved! Inca has no use for Oko. Two leaders can not live in sight of each other."

"Then let me die also," she cried, covering her face with her hands. "Let me die! Without Oko, there is nothing in life for me. Let me die with my people! Let me die with Oko!"

"No, no!" continued Bodo; "you must not die. There is yet much in life for you. The great and powerful Inca has fallen in love with your beautiful face, and he would make you a Queen in his far south country. It is a wonderful place, he tells me. There are great buildings in his country, reaching far up into the heavens, and they are full of golden ornaments. The country is beautiful. It is always warm there; it must be like the stories of the lands the priests tell to us. Think of the glory that would be yours, my Queen!"

For a time Gurda stood silent, a world of contempt and hate and scorn in her beautiful eyes. Her bosom heaved convulsively, her form trembled with passionate feeling.

"Do not call me your Queen," she cried. "Base, ignoble fiend that you are. Vile, traitorous serpent! I can see all now: you have been

plotting and plotting; deceiving and betraying your fellow-countrymen. You have sold yourself for your accursed love of honor. What blood-stains are on your hands! The curse of the god is upon you! You have outraged his sanctuary and killed his High Priest. I see it all now! Oh! do not start so," she continued, as the dwarf moved uneasily; "the curse is upon you, and you will never escape it."

"Think, think of what you are doing," said Bodo, threateningly; "do you wish to die? Do you wish to be butchered by these savage warriors? Think of what is in store for you if you but give yourself to Inca. You will be a Queen—a great Queen—over such a nation as you have never dreamed of. Riches, power, glory shall be yours. Here, what are you? A Queen only in name."

"Stop!" she commanded. "Do not talk to me of gold and honors. I spurn them all. I hate the dark-faced son of the South! I would rather kill him than go with him to his country. Do not keep me here longer. I must hasten to Oko, my King. There, at least, I can die happy," and Gurda started through the forest.

"Hold!" cried Bodo, seizing her by the arm; "do you forget yourself? What do you care for Oko, or any other man? They are all animals, feeding their lusts upon your charms.

As well Inca as Oko! What difference to you? Listen to me, and come with me.”

“Fiend!” she shrieked, turning upon him like a tigress at bay; “were I less woman than animal, I would kill you. Yes, kill you, and glory in your death. Your miserable, dwarfish body betrays the mind within it. Speak no more insulting words to me! Release me, release me,” and she struggled furiously with the wretch.

“You she-wolf,” panted Bodo, struggling with her, “you shall not escape me! I can not be foiled. My plans are all perfect, and you shall go just where I say.”

With a low, trilling whistle, Bodo summoned help. Instantly a score of dark forms sprang up from the deep shades, and hastened toward him.

“Here is the beautiful Gurda,” he hissed. “I give her over into your hands.”

“Oh, beautiful white lily of the North, look upon me,” exclaimed a low voice; “you shall be with me forever hereafter.”

With sinking heart, Gurda turned her head, and gazed into the dark face of Inca! She did not cry out; she did not utter a sound, but swooned away!

Placing her upon a rude litter, borne by four stalwart warriors, the band started southward,

and soon passed out of sight into the shades of the forest.

Bodo stood for a long time in the dark shades, evidently wrapped in deep thought. At last he turned toward the fort:

“To-morrow night!” he muttered; “to-morrow night!”

CHAPTER XI.

THE STROKE OF FATE.

The sudden darkness of death
Overwhelmed them like the breath
And smoke of a furnace-fire:
By the river's bank and between
The rocks of the ravine,
They lay in their bloody attire.

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Heretofore we have glanced but casually at the great fortifications, within which the subjects of Oko had gathered for safety. The fort was one of the most wonderful works of this people, and represented years of toil. It had been begun by one of the early kings, soon after the fugitives had fled from the "land of oppression," and was intended as a work of defense against the warlike people supposed to be inhabiting some part of this new country. The slow work of its construction was carried on through the reigns of many rulers, and as the massive walls of the immense earthwork rose high in air, both rulers and subjects looked on it with pride.

We can understand something of the wearisome work of its construction, when we learn that all was done by hand; they possessed no beasts of burden, no tools of strength and effectiveness, but like swarms of busy ants they toiled

on with unwearied patience, carrying the soil in wicker baskets. The years saw many of the laborers grow old and die, but new and strong hands took up the work where they had left it, and continued the process of building. Time, at length, brought about its completion, and it stood a silent monument to their patient industry.

The site on which it is located was chosen on account of its naturally strong position. It is a hill on the east bank of a river, which in many places is very steep. A ravine, on the eastern side, starting from near the upper end of the hill, runs southward, and turns, at the southern extremity, abruptly westward to the river. This place, difficult of access as it is, at once commended itself to the early kings as an ideal place for defense against any enemy, and when the great walls were completed, stretching out their length over five miles, and enclosing an area of almost one hundred acres, the people sang praises to their god, and felt sure that behind these massive walls they could protect themselves from any danger.

The area enclosed by the walls, in shape, somewhat resembles a huge dumb-bell. There are the rude outlines of what could represent the two spheres of the bell, and the narrow isthmus for the connecting bar. Across the isthmus joining the two enclosures stretches a

dividing embankment. This had been planned with great care and forethought, the intention being to render the fortification doubly difficult to capture. Should the enemy gain possession of one of the large enclosures, the warriors would retreat into the other, and continue their resistance. At intervals along the wall opened the gateways. These gateways were narrow openings in the wall to permit of entrance; they could be easily guarded by a few men, and did not offer easy places of attack to the enemy. In the present ruined condition of these fortifications, we can scarcely distinguish the original gateways; the walls have crumbled in many places, the rains have started washes that have worn into deep gullies, while burrowing animals have aided in the work of demolition.

After the completion of the great work, it was occupied by a strong guard for many years. But as time passed on, and no enemy ever disturbed the peaceful quiet of the nation, the guard was withdrawn. Then the priests, recognizing the value of the place as a center for religious observances, obtained possession of it from the kings. Mounds were constructed within and without the walls, and here annually, for many centuries, festivals were held and solemn sacrifices offered to the sun. The central place of these observances was at the north-eastern extremity of the surrounding wall.

Just without the wall two mounds had been constructed, and parallel walls extended northeasterly, a distance of one thousand three hundred and fifty feet, their ends joining around a small mound. Between these walls a stone-paved street extended to the small mound. This was the sacred way, over which the priests passed to the sacrificial mound.

What scenes were here enacted in the ages past! The dark mists of the ages roll away, and we see, as did a learned student of these times,* the scenes transpiring here: "A train of worshipers, led by priests clad in their sacred robes, and bearing aloft the holy utensils, pass in the early morning, ere yet the mists have risen in the valley below, along the gently swelling ridge on which the ancient roadway lies. They near the mound, and a solemn stillness succeeds their chanting songs; the priests ascend the hill of sacrifice and prepare the sacred fire. Now the first beams of the rising sun shoot up athwart the ruddy sky, gilding the topmost branches of the trees. The holy flame is kindled, a curling wreath of smoke arises to greet the coming god; the tremulous hush which was upon all nature breaks into vocal joy, and songs of gladness burst from the throats of the waiting multitude as the glorious luminary arises in

* Mr. Hosea: Cincinnati Quarterly Journal Science, 1874.

majesty and beams upon his adoring people. A promise of renewed life and happiness. Vain promise, since even his rays can not penetrate the utter darkness which for ages has settled over this people!"

These quiet scenes had now changed into far different ones. Within this vast enclosure were gathered the inhabitants of the nation, awaiting the issue of the danger which daily threatened them.

After the abduction of Gurda, Bodo returned to the fort and spent the remainder of the day in giving instructions to the warriors there.

"There is no danger of an attack for several days," he told them. "Before the southern warriors can reach here, they must pass King Oko's warriors. My spies report that the enemy are still encamped far south of here, but that they are making preparations to march against us in a few days. The priests say that the sacrifices point to safety for several days to come; therefore rest yourselves to-night from the labors and fears which you have been experiencing for many days. I go to-night to consult with King Oko; I return to-morrow. Until then be faithful."

Bodo now went to the guards and gave them orders for the night. He commanded that no guards be stationed without the walls, and that only one be left at each of the gateways!

"There is nothing to fear to-night," he said; "rest while you can, for days of danger and alarm are ahead of us."

At this he departed and the shades of dusk were soon falling over the encamped host. The guards uneasily took their places; the strange orders of Bodo filled them with fear, and they hesitated to obey them. One of them made his way quietly to the Chief of the Priests, and asked him:

"Are we to obey the commands of Bodo to-night?"

"By all means," answered the priest, eyeing the guard narrowly. "The commands of Bodo must be obeyed in every particular."

The guard turned slowly, and reluctantly left the place. Several times he halted and seemed about to turn back again, but at last he disappeared, and the priest saw him no more.

It is early evening. The stars come forth with their wonted brilliancy. In the west hangs Venus, like a suspended globule of pinkish fluid; the moon is just peering over the top of the eastern trees, and a deathlike stillness gathers over all the scene. The solitary guards pace slowly in front of the deserted gateways, and the dark, massive walls look threatening in the dim light. The guards are awake to every disturbance, but none of them see a dark form passing slowly and

cautiously along, within the shelter of the forest-shades.

Later evening: The moon is sinking low in the heavens, a grayish haze is gathering and shutting out the light of the stars; in the lowlands beneath the fortified hill a fog is rising from the river and covering the landscape, far and near. A cool wind is springing up from the east, and the trees groan dismally. The fort is shrouded in darkness. The guards peer eagerly through the foggy hazes. More and still more figures are gathering silently in the surrounding forests!

Still later: The moon has sunk from sight; the sky is overcast with a chilly haze; the fog is more dense. A guard at one of the eastern gates, sleepily walking his beat, hears a slight sound in front of him; it is a rustling sound—it must be a footfall. It ceases. The guard listens intently. Not a sound. Several minutes pass. Soon the guard, straining his vision to its utmost, thinks he distinguishes a form stealthily moving a short distance in front of him. He calls to it softly; no answer. Can it be that his eyes are deceiving him? Stooping with great care, the guard picks up a small stone, and hurls it toward the dark object. There is a quick bound, a crackling of bushes, and the vision is gone. The guard utters a short, shrill cry of alarm. It is the signal of destruction.

From every direction, all around the great fort, dark forms surge forth, and with savage yells spring toward the walls. The few brave guards, with shrieks of warning, resist fiercely, but are soon cut down, and the enemy enter from every side, just as the terrified victims are springing from their disturbed sleep. They spring to their weapons, and the night resounds with the hoarse whoop of the warriors, the shrill cries of the women, the wailing of the children, and the clashing of battle-axes. The combat is terrible. The swords of the southern warriors drink blood, but they have an immense multitude to overcome. In the darkness it is hard to tell friend from foe, and the struggle wavers, now this way, now that.

Over the walls there springs a band carrying blazing torches which throw a weird light over the struggling, bleeding mass of humanity within. The butchery continues, but the sounds of conflict are growing less and less. The keen weapons of the savage warriors have inflicted death at every stroke. The surprised victims have put up a gallant resistance, but they can not stay the maddened fury of their opponents. The ground is soaked with blood.

A bright light springs up. What is it? The southern warriors are applying the torches to the thousands of bark wigwams that had sheltered their slaughtered victims. The fire spreads

rapidly; it throws a lurid glare upon the darkened sky. The dark-faced warriors spring from the surging flames and gather together without the walls. They stand, eagerly watching for any fugitives who attempt to escape from the angry flames, and as any are seen, they are ruthlessly cut down.

For a long time the fire rages, and not until the first signs of dawn appear in the east, do the flames die away. As the day dawns brightly over the land, black columns of smoke roll heavenward from the devastated fort. It forms a peculiar contrast to the fogs dissipating in the river bottoms. Where are the chanting priests who pay their homage to the rising sun? It is the first morning for ages that their songs have not arisen on high! They will never rise more! The sun looks brilliantly down upon the awful scene, where so many of his worshipers lie shrouded in death. His glory is undimmed!

Near the outskirts of the forest lie encamped the savage thousands. Their songs to heathen gods rise on the morning air. Their bloody work will soon be ended. A few more days and silence will be over the land!

CHAPTER XII.

THE SNAPPING OF THE BOW.

No tongue can tell, nor pen portray,
The dying groans of every fray,
No artist paint on canvas white the sufferings of the brave;
When time and peace their memory blot,
May flowers blooming o'er the spot,
Where stone nor marble shaft is not, mark some poor hero's
grave.

—E. L. AULTMAN.

Bodo reached Oko's camp just after dusk, on the day of the abduction of Queen Gurda. He found Oko greatly troubled.

"Where is the Queen?" he asked in alarm.
"She was to come to the camp to-day."

"Is not the Queen here?" said Bodo, starting.
"She set out for the camp in company with a strong guard, while the sun was yet high in the heavens. Can it be that she is not here?"

"Nothing has been seen of her to-day. Bodo, how does it happen that you allowed her to start on such a perilous journey unaccompanied by yourself? Do you not know that you are responsible for her safety? You have always been a faithful servant to me, but I can not overlook this neglect. The entire company has no doubt fallen into the hands of the cunning savages. What shall we do? Gurda gone! The

only stay of my faltering heart! The curse of the god falls heavily upon me!"

For a long time the King paced back and forth in the falling gloom; his head sank forward on his breast, and his whole attitude betokened sorrow and discouragement.

"What shall we do, Bodo? What shall we do?" he asked, at last, fastening his troubled eyes upon the dwarf.

"Oh, my King, I will do anything you command me! Anything to save the noble Gurda. Give me a strong guard, and I will set forth at once to search for her, and woe unto the savage fiends that cross my path! Let me go, my King! Let me go!" pleaded Bodo, with feigned earnestness.

For a few moments Oko stood in deep thought. Should he send forth his faithful servant on a dangerous and almost hopeless quest? Should he sacrifice more lives wantonly? At last he turned and said:

"You must not go, Bodo! To set forth at such an hour, traversing the forests that are no doubt filled with hidden enemies, would be only to send you to certain death. Your aid and counsel are needed every day; I can not send you forth. Where the Queen is now, I do not know. She may have turned back to the fort. The guards may have lost their way. It can not be that trusted guards like those of ours have been de-

coyed into the hands of the enemy. There is nothing now to do but to wait for the morrow, and start in search of the Queen. Until then, we can only hope for the best."

"But think, my King," urged Bodo. "It is an awful thing to stay here to-night, when the Queen may be in the power of the treacherous savages. How can I remain here quietly? I must go."

"No, no, Bodo, wait for the morning!" answered the King, and he turned and walked sadly away.

The dwarf watched him with a malignant smile on his cunning features.

"Wait for the morning! Wait for the morning! Yes, yes, that is good indeed. It will save Bodo many a weary step! And before the morning comes, what may not happen? But the beautiful Gurda is safe. Yes, far safer, thanks to me, than if she were in Oko's camp. I was careful to see to that. Bodo loves the Queen, and will make her a Queen indeed! But the night grows late and weariness creeps over me. I must sleep, for there is yet much work before me."

At this he walked away, passed softly among the sleeping warriors, and was soon at his wigwam. Silence settled over the camp. It was a warm night of late summer, and the leaves stirred softly in the stillness. Now and then the shrill sound of the cicada broke on the air,

after which the stillness seemed more intense. Every one was wrapped in slumber, save the faithful guards whose moccasined feet made no sound on the yielding grass.

Oko had long since fallen into a troubled sleep. Now and then he turned uneasily on his blankets, or muttered unintelligible words. As the night advanced, strange dreams haunted him, and in the midst of one of them, he sprang to his feet.

"They have her!" he muttered; "they have her!"

Then as his senses gradually came to him, he peered long and intently into the darkness. What was that which suddenly burst on his vision?

To the northeast a brilliant light blazed up, and rapidly increased in intensity. The guards noticed it at once, and immediately began arousing the sleeping warriors. Gathering together in awed groups, they watched the light, growing ever larger and brighter. Summoning Bodo, the King consulted with him earnestly.

"What can it be, Bodo?" he asked presently. "The enemy are not to the northeast of us, and why should our people start such a fire? It is certainly not a signal fire; it has no resemblance to one. Can it be at the fort?" and again he turned toward the lurid heavens.

"At the fort! At the fort!" echoed the dwarf, in a hollow voice. "Why should it be at the fort? And yet," he continued, a strange look on his face, "it is in the direction of the fort. What does it mean? What can it mean?"

Just then a messenger came running to the King. He was breathless and almost speechless. He pointed wildly to the blazing sky, and said hoarsely:

"The fort! The fort! The enemy have reached the fort, and are destroying all within it! I was in the forest to-day, with another warrior, and we were watching the movements of the enemy. We saw them starting silently to the northeast, and we followed them stealthily. For a long time, as softly as the gliding serpent, we followed in their path, until a twig snapped under my companion's foot. Instantly the savages turned upon us. We sprang away, and hastened through the forest, but they followed us swiftly. They captured poor, faithful Gorso, but I escaped them, and have been traveling hard to reach here. They have stolen around us, my King, and are destroying the fort!"

Oko covered his face with his hands, and with a groan sank to his knees.

"It is the dream, Bodo!" he cried. "It is the fulfillment of the dream. Oh, see the blazing heavens! It is just as it was in my dream!"

The curse is upon us! We can not escape it! A few more days and we shall all perish!"

Silently the assembly of warriors—the only representatives remaining, of the once great nation—stood and gazed upon the glowing sky. The reflection of the flames fell full upon their faces, making them look ghastly in the semi-darkness. Not a word was spoken. Terror, sorrow, despair sealed their lips. At last the light grew dimmer; the darkness shut down upon it, gradually quenching its brightness. A few more minutes, and it had died completely away. Still no one stirred. Presently Oko turned from the place, and as he passed the silent warriors, they heard him mutter:

"The curse is upon us! The curse is upon us!"

The next day dawned brightly upon the little remnant of brave warriors. It dragged wearily along, for a moody silence brooded over the camp. Spies, sent out during the day, returned toward evening, announcing the complete destruction of all within the fort. The enemy, they reported, were still encamped near the walls, resting after their work of death. The story was heard in silence; there was no word spoken, only a deepening of the drawn lines on the set faces. Oko, heaving a deep sigh, drew his mantle more closely about him, and walked sadly away from the silent groups of warriors.

Sorrow had tried him to the limit of his endurance. Henceforth he faced all stoically, almost recklessly. Bodo watched him furtively with his cunning eyes, as he passed from sight. Did a pang of regret seize upon him? No. He only hissed under his breath:

“Proud, haughty chieftain! You shall be brought still lower! For years you have lorded it over Bodo, but your time is growing short. I shall soon have you crushed under my heel! Oh, the glory of it! The glory of it!

As evening again approached, Oko left the camp, and climbing to the summit of a near-by knoll, gazed long and thoughtfully over the surrounding country. As he looked over what had been a part of his once prosperous, happy empire, tears came to his eyes. Ah! it was no womanly weakness that overcame him. It was the agony of a great soul, weeping over the scenes of former peace and glory. Scipio, the great Roman general, as he viewed the ruins of fallen Carthage, wept as he thought of the fate that would one day overtake Rome, and falteringly repeated the prophetic lines of Homer:

“The day shall come in which our sacred Troy,
And Priam, and the people over whom
Spear-bearing Priam rules, shall perish all.”

Little wonder is it, then, if Oko gave way to his emotions, as he looked down over a ruined country, and the last of his brave subjects, still

clinging loyally around him. Choking down the sobs that were rising in his throat, he exclaimed bitterly:

“Oh, my brave warriors, to what a fate are you doomed! A few more days, and your blood will also drench the parched earth. Nothing can avert the destruction that presses closely upon us. From the first I have felt that all was in vain. How horror has succeeded horror; it is terrible to think of it. Soon, like my brave subjects, I must fall a victim to the cruel savages; soon I must die! Why do I falter when I think of death? Have I anything to fear? Have I not always obeyed the commandments of the great Sun-god, and kept the faith with all my subjects? Yet what mystery seems to close about me,” he groaned, as he sank on the ground, and lifted his eyes to the twinkling stars above.

“Oh, glorious attendants of the Priestess of the Sun, how calmly do you gaze down upon me! What mysteries are revealed to you! What is there beyond you? Somewhere beyond you, the priests tell us, are the fields of the faithful where the great Sun-god rewards his worthy subjects. There, they say, is everlasting glory. It must be so! For what are earthly honors and earthly glories? Where are the honors and glories of my forefathers—those mighty kings who ruled before me? They are dead and moldered now to dust, and the names of many of them are

forgotten! Their glory is no more! Yet somewhere, somehow, their spirits must be living still! And what is fame? My fame had spread through all my nation, and my name was on every lip, and I was looked upon as the greatest king of earth. Yet see unto what I have come! Stripped of every honor, of almost all power, I am left naked to my enemies. My fame has passed away. I know the weakness of mankind. There is a higher power than any that is of earth; if there is not, on what can I lean? What longing is this which comes over me to-night? It is a longing to humble myself before a power that can save me from everlasting death; a longing to meet my brave warriors and my noble Gurda, in the happy fields. None can satisfy this longing save the great Sun-god, and to him I humble myself to-night. Him have I served during all my life, and served him faithfully. To him I pray that all my subjects may be saved, and that he may be merciful even unto our enemies. They have never known the story of the great Sun-god, and they do not know the awful sins they do. The meaning of all this strife, I do not now know, but I shall know hereafter!"

This from the lips of an earthly king! These words spoken some years before the doctrine of Jesus Christ was proclaimed throughout Israel, and before his life-blood ebbed away on Calvary

to atone for the sins of mankind! What do they show? They show that there have been within the human breast, from the day of man's creation, a longing for eternal life and a feeling of infinite compassion for erring beings, needing only the Christ to come to earth and teach the doctrine of everlasting love, and point the way to the Kingdom of kingdoms!

Oko sat upon the knoll, until far in the night, gazing out over the dark, silent landscape, or looking above upon the glories of the heavens, and it was with feelings of regret that he at last left the place and once more returned to his camp.

The next morning he assembled his warriors before him, and told them of the destruction that was inevitable:

"To struggle against the innumerable host of the enemy is almost idle, but, my warriors, what is there left for us to do? We can not escape them, and it is better for us to die bravely fighting, than to be carried away into captivity and slavery. But I can not command you to remain with me and be mercilessly slaughtered. However, I shall never surrender to them; it is my duty to die in defense of my country, and if any here wish to remain with me, I will lead them on to battle. Will any remain?"

A murmur spread through the ranks. Was it a murmur of approval or disapproval? It

increased to a shout, and together the brave men signified their intention and desire to die with their King.

Oko issued an order for the army to move a few miles to the southwest, where there was a more favorable location for them to make their last stand. Here they encamped and awaited the onslaught of the southern warriors.

They had not long to wait. Spies, who were keeping a close watch on the movements of the enemy, reported that they were fast moving to the south. Their approach was awaited with anxiety. Determination was written on every face—the determination to die battling for their King.

The savage host came into sight late in the afternoon. They were shouting and yelling and rejoicing over their recent bloody work. Down they bore upon the silent, determined warriors of Oko, who stood close together, with tense muscles and weapons in hand. It was a second Persian host, bearing down upon a little Spartan band. On they came with louder shouts and yells; nearer and nearer they drew, until, twang!—a flight of arrows whizzed toward them. This was the signal for the onset, and soon the battle was raging. And it was a bloody battle. All the rage against the insolence and treachery of the southern warriors welled up in the breasts of Oko's men. They fought bravely and

fiercely. The tall form of Oko could be seen moving among the struggling mass of humanity, his deep voice giving words of command, and his heavy battle-axe crushing in the skulls of strong warriors at every stroke.

At the first onset of the enemy, and while all were bravely fighting, the dwarfed form of Bodo stole quietly to the shelter of the near-by forest, and with gleaming eyes he watched the awful butchery. In the midst of the struggle, Oko called for Bodo. He was nowhere present. All thought he had been killed.

"Yes," said Oko, sadly, "brave Bodo has no doubt been killed. The rest of us must die, as well!"

As the battle continued, it grew fiercer. The little band, standing bravely together, beat off the surging masses for a long time. But at last, with a furious onset, they drew nearer, and closed about the remaining warriors. Terrible hand-to-hand fighting began, and soon Oko closed in with a stalwart southern warrior. They struggled long and hard, each attempting to crush the other with a battle-axe. Oko was fast overcoming his opponent, when he was cut down by one of the enemy, behind him. As he fell, a hoarse shout went up from the surging thousands.

"The King is dead! The King is dead!" they cried.

The cry struck terror into the hearts of the remaining band, and their resistance grew weaker. The dark-faced savages made an attempt to drag away the body of Oko, but his followers closed around it in a frenzy of rage and beat them back. But to struggle longer was useless; the little company was overwhelmed by mere numbers, and with a cry of great despair they ceased fighting. Their weapons were hastily taken from them, and they were placed under a strong guard.

One of the surviving priests made his way to Inca, and begged that they might be allowed to perform the burial rites of Oko. After long consultation with his warriors, Inca granted them permission to draw apart, and do this. Gurda came forward and plead long and tearfully to be allowed to attend the priests. Inca savagely granted the request, muttering the while:

“The dead beast will never trouble me more. The lily of the North may weep for him, but she is mine now forever.”

Taking Oko's body, the priests wrapped it in dark burial robes, and placed it upon a rudely constructed litter. This was borne by four of the priests. Before and behind the litter marched two priests, bearing lighted torches. Behind these came the subjects, who had fought with him unto death. They marched slowly

southward for several miles. The priests kept up their mournful death-chants, and with bowed heads the sorrowful warriors now and then mumbled a prayer. Towards evening they came to a high mound and halted. Strong hands began work, and soon an excavation was made into its base, and when the center was reached a tomb was hollowed out for the reception of Oko's body. The priests removed his body from the litter, and placed it gently upon the ground. Then their leader stepped forward, and spoke to the silent group, gathered around :

"Oh, my children, the wrath of the great Sun-god rests heavily upon us! Our nation has fallen, and here before us lies the prostrate form of our King. For a long time he ruled over us with kindness and wisdom. His every thought was for his country and his subjects. He died bravely fighting, and breathing a prayer to the great god. There is nothing left for us except to place his body within this tomb, and lift up our voices for the repose of his spirit. If we meet any one in the happy fields, we may be sure of meeting our great and noble Oko. But listen, my children, I have still greater things to say unto you! For many days since the death of the holy Gilgo, I have been working upon a tablet," and, at this, he drew from beneath his dark robe a small, dark-colored stone tablet.

Holding it up to the view of the wondering crowd, he continued:

“I had a dream, in which the great Sun-god appeared to me, and spoke to me through the mouth of Gilgo. After prophesying destruction to our enemies, he pointed to the shining heavens, and there I saw a strange design. The god said unto me: ‘Engrave the design shining on yonder sky, upon a tablet. When your King dies, bury it with him.’ Then I awoke, but the dream was not forgotten. For many days I wrought, and finished the engraving of the strange design. Now I shall bury it with Oko: I shall place it beneath his noble head, that it may rest there for ages. And what is the meaning of it all, my children? These curious tracings have a terrible meaning for our enemies. Here you see on one side this beautiful scroll-work: this represents the former greatness and glory of our nation. Then you see a dividing line, and at the other side the same scroll-work again. This means that the glory of our nation shall pass away, and for many years darkness and silence will spread over this land; then shall come forth a mighty people from far shores, who shall destroy the cruel nation of our enemies, and build their villages and their holy places over the graves of our enemies, and of our own people. We shall perish from the earth, but our wrongs will be avenged!”

Without a sound the warriors now passed slowly by, and looked for the last time upon the face of their great King. Gurda came forward, last of all, and for a long time stood and gazed upon the noble countenance, tenfold more striking in the majesty of death. She shed no tears. Ah, no! The bitterness of despair had dried the fountain of her tears. She touched his cold and pallid features, and whispered:

“Great, noble Oko, you were the center of all my life! My love for you never faltered, and now, though dead, I love you more than in life. My heart shall never be false to you; though I may be carried away to distant lands, and made subject to warrior kings, my life-blood shall flow only for you. Never again shall I look upon your noble face, but in the happy fields our spirits may be joined together again! Farewell, farewell, my King!”

The priests lifted up the stiffened corpse and carried it within the mound. Within they chanted dirges; without some were beating a weird tattoo upon rude, skin drums—a solemn death-knell for the King. Soon the priests came forth; the last prayers were uttered, the last dirges chanted. The earth was thrown back over the corpse, and the sod replaced. The King was buried!

Just as the last rite was performed, the sun came forth from behind a dark cloud-bank, and

shone brightly for a few moments. Then it sank out of sight beneath the treetops, and darkness settled over the land. The last ray of hope was gone! The glory of the nation, the glory of the King, the glory of the religion, all passed from the earth with the setting sun!

CHAPTER XIII.

REMORSE.

Then came wandering by,
A shadow like an angel with bright hair
Dabbled in blood; and he shriek'd out aloud:
"Clarence is come! false, fleeting, perjur'd Clarence!
That stabbed me in the field by Tewksbury!
Seize on him, furies, take him to your torments!"

—SHAKESPEARE.

Conscience! What is it, and whence does it come? How is it that all of us, good or bad, high or low—no matter what our condition or position in life—possess this vague, intangible something? We can not get away from it if we would! It is ever with us; it is of us, a part and parcel of our spiritual being. We may outrage it, and travel far away and attempt to lose ourselves in the great, bustling world-throng; we may mingle in the gayest companies, and drink the cup of pleasure to our heart's content, and flatter ourselves that we have forgotten the wrong committed back many years ago, and many miles away. But it is useless! Useless! Conscience can not be wantonly outraged. Just when we fancy that all is forgotten—that the memory, even, of the old crime is blotted out—it may be in the gay whirl of life, it may be in the stillness and quietness of the midnight—that

still, small voice asserts itself; the memory of the past shines out, bright and clear, and we see ourselves stripped bare of all earthly, personal pride, and stand forth in all the hideousness of self! The sins of the past roll in upon us like great, heaving ocean billows; they crush us down and submerge us beneath their vastness. The faces of those whom we have wronged come up before our vision; gradually they lose their human semblance, and like so many fiends grin at us and call out for vengeance! The darkness of horror settles down around us, and like haunted wretches, with glaring eyes and trembling forms, we slink through life, afraid to look our fellow-beings in the face! Oh, there is no evading, there is no escaping this conscience!

We all possess it. Savage or civilized, it is a part of us. It is a God-given faculty to guide us through the temptations of life, and fit us for the coming world. No man can go very far from the path of rectitude, if he only obey the silent, yet trumpet-like, voice that says to him: "Stop! this is wrong." The oldest, most hardened sinners may seem to us to have little or no conscience; but they have. They have fought against it for years, they have sold themselves to the Devil body and—no, not soul; the conscience is a part of the soul that can not be sold, and still it torments them! They never get beyond its torments. Some of them with ill-

feigned bravado struggle against it during all their lives; others take their own lives in a desperate attempt to escape its awful pangs. But do they escape them? Is not this unconquerable, ever-present voice immortal? Will not its torments be tenfold greater in the regions of the damned?

Gay, thoughtless youth often underrates the strength of conscience. With swift-beating pulses it tramples this soul-faculty underfoot, and with a ringing laugh of indifference passes on. For the time conscience is drowned in the swift flow and whirl of life, but when Time, with ruthless hand, slows the swinging life-pendulum, and presses upon the bending back with ever-increasing pressure; when pleasures grow fewer and yield less of enjoyment; when the sobered mind dwells longer on the meaning of life, and of what is beyond life—then it reasserts itself boldly and with greater strength. Every thoughtless sin of youth has expanded into a monstrous ogre. Night and day, they are present. They never depart!

There is no escaping it. That has been often tried, but tried in vain. Judas Iscariot, he who betrayed the Saviour of the world, sought vainly to flee from the torments of his burning conscience. How woefully he failed! Driven to despair, he took his own life! Macbeth, after the murder of Duncan, lived in constant terror,

pursued by the awful voice that cried: "Sleep no more; Macbeth doth murder sleep; Macbeth shall sleep no more!" To the hour of his death he was haunted by these dreadful sounds. Clarence, behind the dark walls of London's Tower, could not escape it; his troubled rest was full of "fearful dreams, of ugly sights," for as he said:

"O Brakenbury, I have done these things
That now give evidence against my soul."

As others could not escape, neither could the treacherous Bodo. He had now done all that he possibly could do. His hands were stained with the blood of his countrymen; his soul was blackened with the direst crimes of earth. Before all of his nefarious work was accomplished, he was sustained by the excitement of constant action, but now that all was over, and he had time to reflect on the past, conscience smote him. Inca and his warriors no longer fawned upon him, as they had done when they were, through him, accomplishing their purposes. They did not trust him. They could not. Was he not a traitor? Had he not betrayed those of his own blood? Could he be faithful to others? No, no! They turned from him with looks of contempt and disgust.

The silent, uncomplaining sorrow of Gurda smote him, daily. Her soft, dark eyes had lost their wonted brilliancy, but from their liquid

depths came forth consuming fires for Bodo. He avoided her presence. He avoided the few remaining men of his nation; they rebuked him openly and bitterly; it was difficult to restrain them from taking his life.

He no longer associated with any one. He spent his time wandering in the vicinity of the camp, and at times could be heard mumbling to himself. The warriors, with meaning grunts, turned from him, and whispered among themselves that the "spirits were tormenting him." In all ages of the world, savages have felt a horror of the insane; they turn from them with superstitious fear. This is what they feared, when they said the spirits were tormenting him. Yes, the spirits were tormenting him; they were fast driving him to destruction. All the spirits of his dead countrymen—victims of his insensate wickedness and avarice—were pursuing him, and, like great night birds, were beating their dark wings round his head. The curse of the god was upon him!

He returned to the camp at night, and slept apart from the rest, wrapped closely in his blanket. Many times during the night he would jump to his feet, shriek loudly, and hold his hands over his head, as if to ward off a threatened blow. His eyes would roll and glare terribly; his face, tensely drawn, looked ghastly, and as he paced among the warriors, they would

hastily avoid contact with him, grunting the while:

“Ugh, the ugly beast!”

At other times he would spring up and shriek:

“Save me! Save me! They are upon me, they are upon me! Gilgo! Gilgo! Take your hands from my throat! The fire! The fire! See the gleaming blazes in the sky! Hear the shrieks! See the blood! Back, Gurda, my Queen, back, I must save you! Oh! Oh! The tablet! The tablet! The great Sun-god is thrusting it down my throat, and it is choking me to death!”

With such broken utterances he would often fall to the ground, and writhe and twist, as if in awful agony. The pangs of conscience. Ah, they are truly awful!

For many days he was thus. He avoided the warriors more and more. He ate but little, and his body grew smaller, and more bent and dwarfish. He had become the terror of the camp, and all looked upon him as the incarnation of some evil spirit. His wild mutterings during the day, his awful shriekings during the night, filled them with terror.

One evening he did not return to the camp at the twilight hour. A sigh of relief went up from the entire host. They hoped he had wandered off and died, or been devoured by some wild beast. But the end was not yet!

Toward morning, when the first faint rays of light crimsoned the east, his emaciated form was seen rushing wildly from the forest. He was shrieking frightfully, and looking back over his shoulder as if pursued by some terrible enemy. His eyes were wild and glassy, his hair disheveled; froth was running from his mouth. Into the midst of the camp he ran. Falling upon the ground in a convulsive fit, he rolled and shrieked:

"The priest! The priest! The savage wolf has jumped upon my back, and his teeth are tearing my throat! Pull him from me! Tear him off! Gilgo, Gilgo, where are you? I did not kill you! Yes, yes, I killed you! But here you are still living and tormenting me! The fires! The eternal fires are burning me! They said they had gone out, but they are burning within me. See! See! The flames are bursting from my mouth and nose and ears! Oh, horrors! Horrors! Let me die! Let me die!"

With a last spasm the body of the traitor was drawn into a tense knot; a last glare of the glassy eyes, a gurgling in the throat, a rush of bloody foam from the mouth, and he was dead! He had paid the penalty! The curse of the god was upon him! His strange, perverted spirit was gone, and before the same tribunal he will be judged, with Gilgo, Oko, and the thousands who through him perished!

“Shall we bury him?” the warriors asked of Inca.

“The beast does not deserve a burial,” he answered; “leave his body to be devoured by the wild animals.”

Placing a noose around his body—for they would not touch it—they dragged him away, and cast his body over a steep hillside. There it lay for a long time; the buzzards circled above it, or angrily quarreled over the putrefying flesh; now and then an animal, stealing from the forest, would frighten away the birds, sniff at the carcass, and trot away.

After all the decayed flesh had been picked from the skeleton, the white bones lay glistening in the sunlight. Every year saw them grow darker and molder more and more, until at last, sinking deep into the earth, the grass grew up and shut them from sight forever!

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE GLARE OF THE TORCHLIGHTS.

Saw ye the Tyrant shedding
The blood of the pure and fair?
O'er the corpses of innocents treading
Whom all but a beast would spare?
Saw ye his red eye watching
As the ravenous wolf his prey;
His crimson arms fiercely snatching
The brave of our land away?

—HARRY JANVIER SMALLEY.

After the almost complete destruction of this nation, the warriors of Inca spread over the entire country, pillaging and destroying. Everything that pleased their fancy they carried away with them; the rest they destroyed. Once prosperous and quiet villages were entered, and through them the dark sons of the South went, destroying and desecrating. Then the torch was applied, and soon nothing remained but dark heaps of ashes.

Nothing was spared. The sacred shrines, the council-chambers, met the same fate as the lowly bark homes of the most humble inhabitants. The victors gloried in their triumphs. They sang wild choruses to their heathen gods, and while the smoke of burning villages filled all the sky, their savage yells and songs resounded through the forests. A dark curse was upon the land.

A whole race was being destroyed and carried off into captivity. It was one of those strange occurrences which God brings to pass, and at which man, in his ignorance, marvels. And he will continue to marvel, until the "heavens are rolled together as a scroll," and he sees with vision that is not of earth.

The workings of the savage mind are beyond our fathoming. What cruel, pitiless pleasure the barbarian takes in gloating over a fallen enemy! How ruthlessly he plunders and destroys, leaving behind him only the darkness of desolation. To conquer, to destroy, is his only object. Warfare is his greatest pleasure, and the fiercer the warfare and the more complete the destruction inflicted, the greater is his pleasure.

"I have conquered," thought Inca, as he strolled about, after having gathered together all of his warriors, in readiness for starting to his country. "I have conquered, and carried into captivity the last remaining warriors of the land. Everything have I subdued and destroyed—villages, forts and fields; and in their place I have left nothing but ashes. I have captured the fair lily of the North. How she will grace the beautiful land of the South! With what envy will all the southern kings and princes see me, bearing her in triumph with me. And I will make her the greatest Queen of the South-

land; nothing can prevent me! The fame and power of Inca must now spread over all the countries of the South."

With such musings as these, the bold, daring warrior would occupy himself in leisure moments. His active mind was ever planning some great enterprise, and to activity of mind he joined quick and decisive action. Now that all had been accomplished, he was anxious to leave the scenes of desolation behind, and carry the report of his great conquests to his people, to fill them with rejoicing.

When the last band of warriors returned from pillaging, Inca gave the command for starting. He ordered that the hands of all the captives should be bound, and that they should be thus driven in advance of the moving host. After sunset the immense assembly was set in motion. For the last time we get a glimpse of it.

In front, with bowed heads and dejected countenances, their hands bound securely behind them, marched the brave warriors of Oko. On either side of them was a strong guard-line, which moved in silence. Then came the surging, tumultuous band of dark-visaged warriors, stretching through the forests for miles. It was an impressive scene! Here was the last remnant of a nation of the earth, being led away, triumphantly, into servitude. Far from their own country, they would be absorbed by the

greater multitude about them, and in a few years their very characteristics would vanish. What thoughts those despairing beings must have had, as they marched for many weary days, over many weary miles! Thoughts of the years of happiness and peace they had enjoyed; of their nation, their religion and their King! But little did these avail them! The die was cast! Their nation had perished forever!

As the column moved, hoarse cries went up to heaven: cries of command, of rejoicing, of exultation. The earth trembled beneath the tread of the mighty host, and as it disappeared in the darkness the trailing smoke of the torches floated back like shadows of despair, hovering for awhile, and then mingling with the dark shades resting over the—VANISHED EMPIRE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRESENT.

Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon;
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold,
Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon!

—BYRON.

After the withdrawal of the southern host, the silence of the ages settled over all the land. Never were prophecies of either God or man so completely fulfilled as were those of the priests of this nation. As predicted, so the nation fell; the silence that was to come, came. But was this all? Did the fulfillment of prophecy stop here? By no means. Even to the end was it carried out.

The survivors, who were carried to the far South by their triumphant conquerors, were soon absorbed by the multitude about them. They ceased to exist as a separate race, but certain qualities which they possessed were never obliterated. The noble qualities of mind which they exhibited at once showed an influence on the savage hordes, and from a bloodthirsty and

brutal race, they were transformed into one which gave more and more evidence of civilization and culture. From a rather low state of primitive culture, they rapidly rose to a much higher one. Their cities and temples became larger and more magnificent; their laws and systems of government became stronger and more clearly defined. The potent force of a strong intellect had been infused into the southern peoples, and it exerted itself more and more during each succeeding year. We can not but believe that the noble Montezumas were the direct descendants of Queen Gurda, and that the loftiness of mind and character which the Spaniards noticed in them, were but heritages transmitted from her. Mind is the only thing of earth that can not be trampled down and destroyed.

As the years passed by, the southern nation increased in strength and power. It reigned supremely over all the South, and built an empire, such that, were the half of its power and glory known, the world would be lost in amazement. But over the ravaged territory of the North lofty trees and rank underbrush spread. The great mounds and monuments which had been erected, slowly sank to lower heights. Then, like a cloud over the fair face of the sun, came a new and barbarous race, spreading itself over the deserted land. Where there had

been peace and happiness, there was now strife and bloodshed. The new and red-skinned people, knowing nothing of the history of the earth-works around them, gave them but little attention, and did not regard them with awe. They constructed their rude, bark wigwams over the scenes of forgotten days, and buried many of their dead in the mounds which already contained the bones of departed heroes.

This was but the pause between the acts of a world-play. Far over seas, there set forth, from a small Spanish port, three vessels, which were destined to carry to these shores a race that would heap insults upon the destroyers of the nation of the Mound Builders. The history of it is indelibly stamped on the minds of all. Over all the fair portions of Mexico and South America, the bearded hosts swept—killing, butchering and enslaving; the clank of chains and the lash of whips drowned the despairing cries that arose from the lips of the suffering mortals. The cries excited no mercy. Confidence was rewarded with treachery; kindness with unkindness. Unless obedient to the letter, the unfortunates were cruelly murdered, and in a few years almost all of them had perished, worked to death in mines, in an idle and senseless search for gold. Was it a just retribution sent upon them, for the cruelty with which they themselves had destroyed a nation?

Is there a law in nature, which punishes sin with sin? However this may be, we see the southern nation overwhelmed and destroyed, amid the jeers and taunts of their conquerors. A strong hand was over them; the hand of another fair-faced race—a race destined to work wonders in this Western hemisphere.

Is not the dream of the priest, in which he saw the wondrous scrollwork on the sky, coming true? Did not the dividing curtains of darkness settle over the country, and rest between the glory of the old nation, and the dawning glory of the new one? Surely, surely!

Like a living tide, the race from across waters poured into the country. From lakes to gulf, from ocean to ocean they spread. They heaped insults upon the races found here, just as long ago predicted. Their cities arose above the graves of the dead, while mound and bank were torn away to make room for spreading civilization. It was but a repetition of the same that has been told: the destruction of one race, and the rise of another.

Around the grave of the departed Oko there was built a great city, filled with the strife and stress of life and commerce. Year after year saw it grow larger and larger, and encroach more and more upon the mound that contained the royal remains. At last there came a time when it was deemed necessary to remove the

mound, and the workmen came upon the much-decayed skeleton of the King, and from beneath the skull they removed the dark stone tablet, still bearing its prophetic tracery. Curious eyes looked upon it, but how little they knew of the troublous times which brought the little tablet into being, or of the fulfillment of its prophecy! Notwithstanding, its every condition has been fulfilled: the southern race destroyed, the darkness of desolation over the land, the great cities and temples above the graves of both friend and foe! All these have come to pass, and the fair-faced race to-day holds absolute dominion over the entire territory from North to South, from East to West.

And now that this little story has been told—now that we have had a glimpse into the past, and have seen the enactment of a part of the world's tragedy—we can only ask ourselves, What does it all mean? Here, indeed, we are brought face to face with a question that has never been answered, and that perhaps never will be. We have all taken walks in late November, when the biting frosts have removed all the freshness and greenness of summer, and left only the straggling stalks of a few wild flowers, which toss idly in the chilly breezes. What is the meaning of it all? Of what use are these dead, dry stalks? Have they ever meant anything to the world? We forget, perchance,

that, only a few weeks since, these withered stems were the glory of the summer, and went to make all that was bright and beautiful.

When we stand beside the rusted remnants of a ruined locomotive—all shapeless and broken—we ask ourselves, What the use of these old, displaced bolts and rods? Here they are, lying before us, but of no use to the world; why were they fashioned into being? Again it is to be feared we have forgotten what they once were, and that one day they helped to carry the burden of the world.

There is naught in this world, nor has there been anything, without a purpose. We may not be able to see and recognize that purpose, but it is there, none the less.

The Present encircles us with noisy activity, yet the noises fade and die away, when we come to reflect upon the Past. All around us stand the silent memorials of the far-distant ages. They are shrunken now, and well-nigh destroyed by the ravages of time; yet when we clamber upon the summits of these earthworks, we are overwhelmed by the thoughts that come rushing in upon us.

Every one of these bits of earth is hallowed; they should be preserved and set apart with reverence, for they are the monuments of a people who did just what we are doing: living

and toiling and laboring upon the earth in the carrying out of a Divine Plan.

Thermopylæ and Marathon have their places in the hearts of the brave; yet they have no greater meaning than do the landmarks of the people whose history we have been following. History has simply thrown more light upon the one nation than upon the other. Fate has preserved a few of the traditions of the one people, and destroyed those of the other; and yet we, who believe that thought is eternal, feel that neither played a greater part in the world's work than the other.

Speculate as we will, conjecture as we do, dream as we wish, out of the silence of the Past there comes no instructing Voice. Man is brought to a complete appreciation of his weakness and ignorance, when he reflects that he can not even say why thousands of his fellow-beings have lived, and wrought, and died. He can not say, nor can he ever say. There is naught left for man except to put his trust in Him who said: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

THE END.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX.

The history of the race of people called the Mound Builders is shrouded in obscurity. All that can be said in regard to them is, that they are supposed to be the nation which constructed the thousands of earthworks which are found over a great part of the United States, and especially in the central States. There are about ten thousand mounds in the State of Ohio alone.

Many of these mounds have been opened, and there have been taken from them skeletons, beads, rude implements of stone and metal, and in a very few cases some strange tablets. This is the extent of our knowledge concerning them. Of their origin, history and final disappearance we know not a thing, beyond conjecture. Not a tradition has come to us concerning them; we do not know what language they spoke, nor the name of any one of them. Many volumes have been written concerning them, the contents of which are made up mostly of descriptions of the remaining earthworks, the contents of the mounds, and speculations as to the origin and life of the people. It has been my pleasure to examine most of these, and to them I owe most of the inspiration for the romance which I have woven.

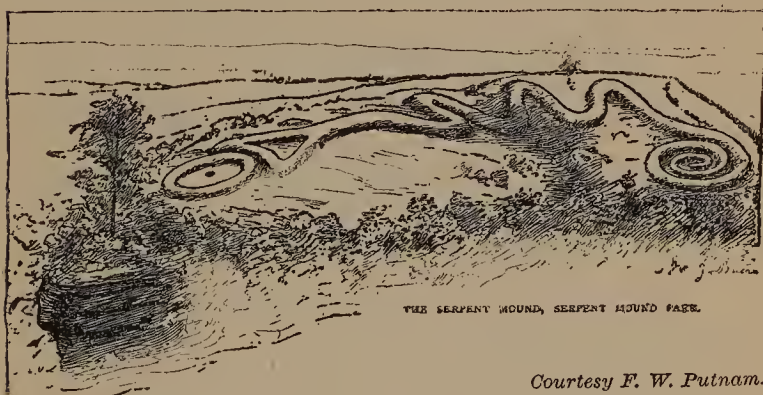
In writing a romance dealing with this pre-historic race, the author finds himself in a peculiar position. To be sure, he has a rich store of literature to consult, but, after plodding through all of it, he is in much the same position that he was before. From the mass of conflicting conjectures and speculations, he must choose those most suited to his purpose; without any authority for so doing, he must coin from his own imagination names for his characters; in other words, from beginning to end, he must make free use of license, breaking away from the hamperings of statements and doubts. This I have done; to what measure of success, the reader must determine. If there is an undue amount of imaginative flight in the romance, the reader should remember that it shows no more of this than many of the so-called historical works on the same subject.

In order that every part of the tale may be understood by all, it is necessary to give a few historical facts and statements in regard to the places and things referred to in it. This is the purpose of the Historical Appendix, and as but little is known certainly, it need be but brief.

ORIGIN AND NAME.—Absolutely nothing is known of the origin of the Mound Builders. Whether they were the first inhabitants of the North American continent, or the offspring of Asiatic parents, is entirely a matter of con-

jecture. Because of the great mounds of earth which they constructed, they are called "Mound Builders." In fact, the building of mounds seems to have been the chief characteristic of this people.

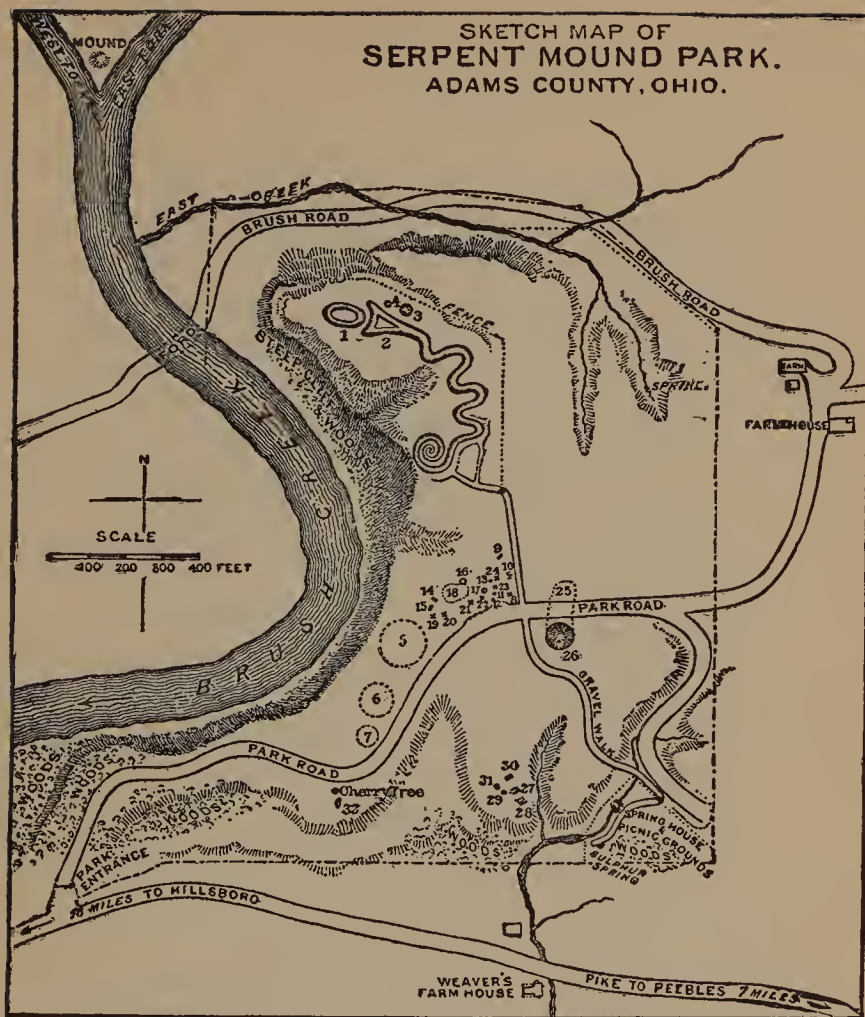
THE SERPENT MOUND.—In Chapter III., and throughout the book, reference is made to the



Courtesy F. W. Putnam.

Serpent Mound. This is one of the most wonderful effigy mounds in the world, and to many the most interesting work left by the Mound Builders. It is situated in the northeastern corner of Adams County, Ohio, about eight miles from Peebles, the nearest railroad station. A crescent-formed spur of land rises abruptly from Brush Creek, the precipice reaching a height of about one hundred and fifty feet, and along the ridge of this height the mound stretches. It is an embankment about five feet in height, gracefully coiled to represent the folds of a serpent,

and is about thirteen hundred feet in length. The serpent seems to be in the act of swallowing an egg. Within the oval embankment representing the egg, there are yet the remains of a stone altar, the stones of which it is composed showing evidences of having been acted upon by fire. The accompanying cut and plan will give a better idea of the mound, than any words of mine. Near the extended jaws of the serpent is a small mound, while another is not far distant from the tail. These mounds were opened a few years since under the supervision of Prof. Frederick Ward Putnam. Quite a number of skeletons and implements were taken from the mounds and the adjoining grounds, some of which are now in the Peabody Museum. The honor of preserving this wonderful effigy falls to Professor Putnam, through whose efforts a subscription of \$8,000 was raised by ladies of Boston, to purchase the land. About seventy-five acres were purchased and deeded to the trustees of Peabody Museum, of Harvard University. The land was turned into a public park, open at all times to visitors. Harvard University found that it was much too expensive to care for the park, so they transferred it to the Ohio State Archæological and Historical Society. A granite monument, bearing this inscription, was placed on the mound near the tail:



Courtesy F. W. Putnam.

KEY TO DIAGRAM.

1, The Oval Embankment in front of the serpent's mouth. In this inclosure is a small mound of stones. 2, The Serpent. 3, A low Artificial Mound near the head of the serpent. 4, A very small Artificial Mound just west of 3. 5, 6, 7, Ancient Excavations, appearing like sink-holes. 8, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and in space bordered by 18, 15, 20, 21, are Sites of Ancient Habitations. 9, Burnt Stones on the clay. 10, A recent Indian Grave over two graves. 11, Portions of Three Skeletons in a pile. 12, 13, Skeletons in the clay. 14, Grave with Two Skeletons. 15, Grave with Skeleton, over which was an ash bed. 16, Pieces of a large Clay Pot. 17, Small Burial Mound. 18, Several small Excavations in the clay, filled with dark earth. 19, 24, See above. This Village Site was afterwards found to extend 200 feet east and south. 25, Burnt space under the dark soil extending to the edge of large conical mound. 26, The Conical Mound, a monument over a single body. 27, 28, Cremation Places in the clay under the dark soil. 29, 30, 31, Very Ancient Graves deep in the clay. 32, Small Mound over four ancient graves in the clay.

THE SERPENT MOUND.

The Serpent Mound was first described by Squier and Davis in "Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley," 1848. Saved from destruction in 1885 by Frederick Ward Putnam, Professor of American Archæology and Ethnology, Harvard University.

The land included in the park was secured by subscription obtained by ladies of Boston in 1887, when it was deeded to the trustees of Peabody Museum, of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

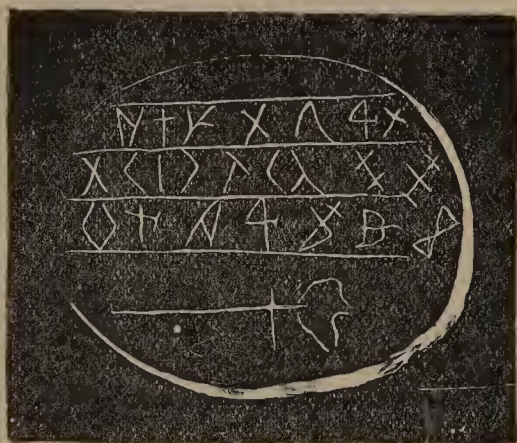
Exempted from taxation by act of Legislature of Ohio in 1888.

Transferred by Harvard University, May, 1900, to the Ohio State Archæological and Historical Society, for perpetual care as a free public park.

On a beautiful day of August, 1903, I visited the Serpent Mound Park. I spent a long time viewing the remaining evidences of a departed age. Every courtesy was extended me by the superintendent of the park, Mr. Daniel Wallace, who was Professor Putnam's assistant in the explorations about the park. Many hundreds of visitors view the Great Serpent every year, and it is without doubt the most interesting archæological ruin in Ohio.

THE GRAVE CREEK TABLET.—The first tablet referred to in Chapter III., is the Grave Creek Tablet. Mac Lean, in "The Mound Builders," says: "The Grave Creek Tablet was found in the Grave Creek Mound, near Wheeling, West Virginia. At the time the mound was opened it belonged to Jesse Tomlinson. The work was

under the supervision of Abelard B. Tomlinson, and was performed at a cost of twenty-five hundred dollars. On the 19th of March, 1838, the work was commenced. An excavation was made towards the center at the north side of the mound, ten feet in height and one hundred and eleven feet long, along the original surface of



GRAVE CREEK TABLET.

the ground. At the end of this adit was a vault twelve feet long by eight wide and seven deep. Upright timbers had been placed along the sides of the vault which supported other timbers thrown across which served for a roof. Over these timbers had been thrown loose stone, such as is found in the neighborhood. The timbers were rotten and the stones had tumbled into the vault. In this vault were found two skeletons, one of which was surrounded by six hun-

dred and fifty beads composed of sea-shells, and a bone ornament six inches long. From the top of the mound a shaft was sunk, and at the depth of thirty-four feet from the bottom another vault was found, containing a skeleton surrounded by over two thousand discs cut from shells, two hundred and fifty pieces of mica, seventeen bead bones, and copper bracelets and rings weighing seventeen ounces. It was in this vault that the inscribed stone was found on the 16th of the following June. . . . The inscribed stone is an oval disc of white sandstone nearly circular in form, about three-fourths of an inch thick, and an inch and a half in diameter. On one of the flat surfaces are engraved three lines of unknown characters. . . . Many efforts have been made to decipher these characters. Henry R. Schoolcraft, having examined the inscription in 1843, arrived at the following conclusions: "Having a copy of Mr. March's 'Grammar of the Icelandic,' of 1838, the appendix to which contains the Runic alphabet, I observed some corresponding characters. By reference to an inscription from Dr. Plott's 'History of Staffordshire,' it was also seen that there were several of the characters quite identical with the ancient form of the Celtic alphabet, as employed in Britain, in the so-called Stick-Book. A copy of the inscription (Townsend's copy) was transmitted to Professor Rafn, at Copen-

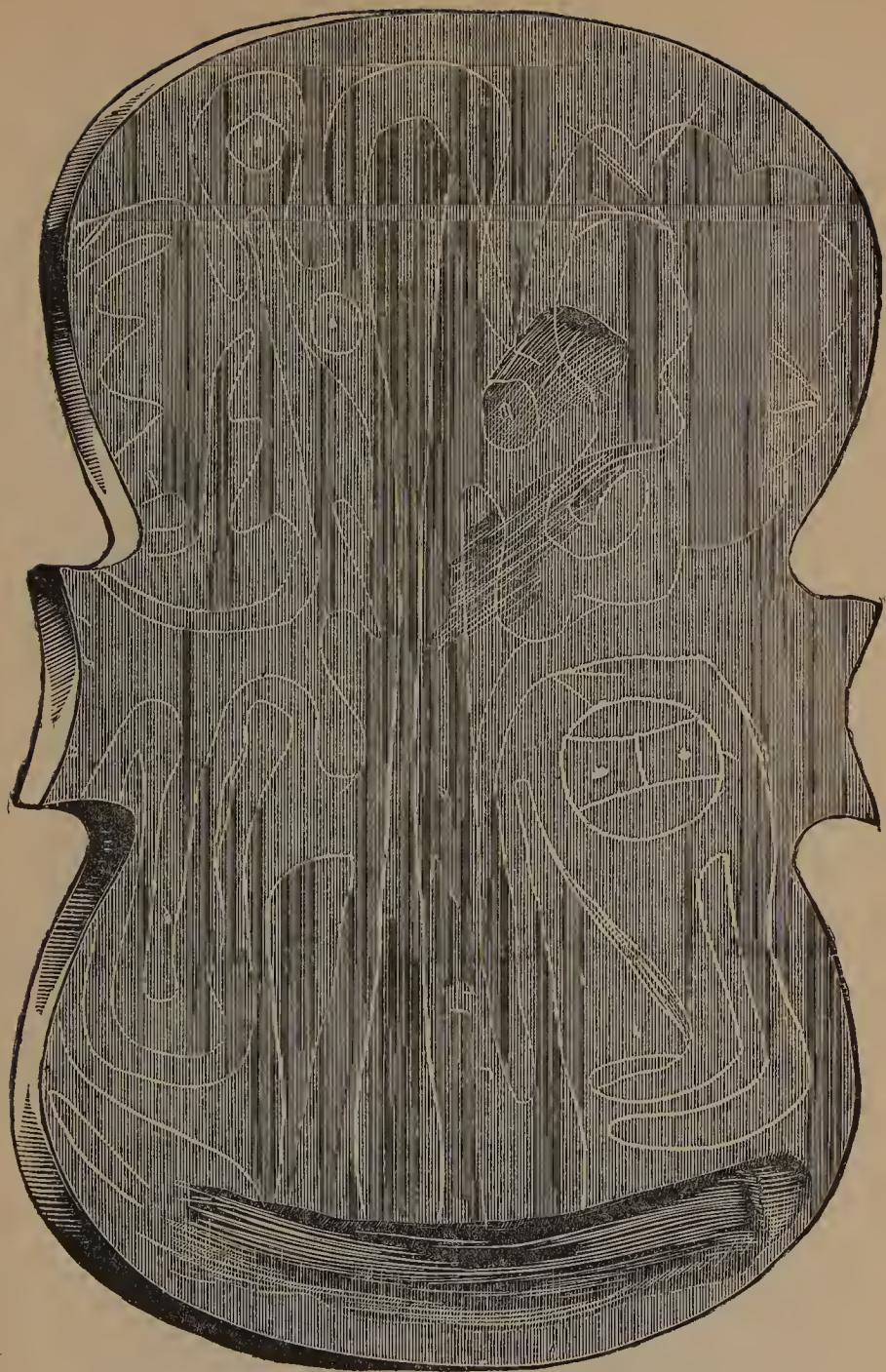
hagen, the distinguished secretary of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries. Mr. Rafn does not find it to be Runic, but is disposed to consider the inscription Celtiberic. The Copenhagen antiquarians were not able to read it, but acknowledged a large portion of its characters to be in the Spanish type of the Celtic. The 'Stick-Book' character of the ancient British Celtic has a resemblance to it. This is perceived in seven of the characters, which are common to both inscriptions; namely, the Celtic and the Virginic. There would appear to be some grounds here for the Welsh tradition of Madoc." Colonel Whittlesly quotes Mr. Schoolcraft as having made the following analysis of the twenty-two separate characters of this stone: "Four Greek; six ancient Gælic; five North Runic; four Etruscan; seven old Erse; two Phœnician; sixteen old British." At the Congress of Nancy, Monsieur Levy Bing made a report upon this inscription from an imperfect engraving. He states that "after different combinations of the twenty-three letters I obtain the following result, that is, eight Canaanite words, having complete sense; forming a phrase which corresponds admirably with the symbol below the inscription. This symbol is a naked sword horizontally directed toward an arc, and supported upon the human head imperfectly designed, which reposes upon two long arms. This

must represent the idea of sovereignty and conquest." The translation of the twenty-three Canaanitish letters is as follows: "What thou sayest, thou dost impose it, thou shinest in thy impetuous clan (?) and rapid chamois." Monsieur Maurice Schwab, in 1857, gave the following rendering: "The Chief of Emigration who reached these places (or this island), has fixed these statues forever." M. Oppert, who followed him, gave this translation: "The grave of one who was assassinated here. May God to revenge him strike his murderer, cutting off the hand of his existence." Upon the face of it all, this is but idle speculation. This stone has been given more importance than it really merits. The inscription takes in too wide a range of alphabetical characters to represent one distinctive language. If it does represent a language, then inscriptions containing similar characters would have been found in different localities. If, in reality, it does represent a language, then the Mound Builders must be placed higher in the scale of civilization than any other nation has ever attained under similar conditions." What I have given for the meaning of the characters on the tablet, is mere invention. I have made no attempt at a translation. To my mind, all such efforts are futile. The inscription can certainly be no more than a rude attempt at picture-writing. See the cut of the Grave Creek Tablet.

THE BERLIN TABLET.—This is the second tablet mentioned in Chapter III. Again quoting Mac Lean: "This tablet was found June 14, 1876, by Dr. J. E. Sylvester and Linzey Cremeans, near Berlin, Jackson County, Ohio. It was found in a small mound situated on the second bottom of a small tributary of Dixon's Run. The stone, which is six inches long, three and five-eighths wide, and half an inch thick, composed of a fine-grained sandstone of a grayish, brown color, occurred on a level with the original surface, placed on its edge with the ends pointing east and west. Both sides are engraved, the style being of that kind known as line-engraving. One side is a reduplication of the other. . . . We give cuts of both sides of this tablet, size of nature. The front view shows the stroke made by the mattock. The lines are evenly cut, and of the same depth throughout, showing that the workman was well skilled in his art. The reverse side is poorly executed. The lines are often mere scratches, and sometimes doubled as if the artist had made a misstroke. Three indentations will be noticed, through two of which the lines have been carried, while one, which is the deepest, and running across the end, either cuts away a part of the work, or else the design was not carried over it. Upon first inspection it would appear that the front view was first executed, and upon the



BERLIN TABLET (*Front View*).



BERLIN TABLET (*Reverse View*).

back the workman sharpened his implements. Afterwards a beginner attempted to copy this, with what success the picture fully illustrates."

THE HOLY RIVER.—This is the Ohio River. I have so named it, because it runs near the Serpent Mound, the "Holy Sanctuary."

THE NATION'S CAPITAL.—I have made bold to locate this at Marietta, Ohio, where the traces of great earthworks yet remain. Well described by Mac Lean, "The Mound Builders," page 44.

FORT ANCIENT.—The earthwork described in Chapter XI. is Fort Ancient. It is situated on the east bank of the Little Miami River, near Lebanon, Warren County, Ohio, and about thirty-three miles northeast of Cincinnati. Mac Lean says: "The terrace upon which the fort is located is very difficult of access from the west. The road leading from Lebanon to Chillicothe passes through it on the north, and its descent into the valley is steep and winding. . . . There are about five miles of wall enclosing an area of a little more than one hundred acres. The embankment is composed of a tough, diluvial clay, ranging from five feet to twenty in height, and averaging between nine and ten in height, and contains six hundred and twenty-eight thousand eight hundred cubic yards of excavation. . . . In order to appreciate this, the most interesting remains of antiquity which the country affords, and to



PLAN OF FORT ANCIENT.

gain a fair understanding of it, it is necessary to see and examine it in person." The accompanying plan gives a fair idea of the remains. It gives me pleasure to say that proper steps are being taken to preserve Fort Ancient. The secretary, in his report of the sixteenth annual meeting of the Ohio State Archæological and Historical Society, April 26, 1901, says: "Mr. Bareis, chairman of the Fort Ancient Committee, made a verbal report concerning their work during the year. The committee, or its members, had made several trips to the Fort to supervise the work being done by Mr. Warren Cowen, the custodian. They had been much pleased with his services; the embankments and park enclosure were never in better condition or more attractive appearance. Thousands of persons have visited the Fort during the year. Under the instructions of the committee, Mr. Cowen was now graveling the road through the Fort; setting out an orchard; and taking special pains to beautify the park for the coming season." This means that this great structure will be preserved to future generations, and the society is to be heartily congratulated upon its good work.

THE LAST STAND.—The last stand of the Mound Builders, under King Oko, I have represented as having taken place near Madisonville, Hamilton County, Ohio. I was led to do this

because of the ancient cemetery found near there. From Howe's "History of Ohio," I quote this paragraph: "The most extensive and interesting of the ancient burial-places is the one known as the prehistoric cemetery, near Madisonville, Ohio, which has become noted for its singular ash-pits, as well as for the skeletons buried in or at the bottom of the leaf-mold covering the pits. One thousand and sixty-five skeletons, seven hundred ash-pits, upwards of three hundred earthen vases, numerous implements of bone, horn, shell, copper and stone have been found." This would seem to indicate that an assembly of men had encamped in this place for some time, as well as that many met death here.

THE CINCINNATI TABLET.—This is the tablet referred to in Chapter XII. Mac Lean says of it: "At the corner of Fifth and Mound Streets, Cincinnati, once stood a mound about twenty-five feet high, with a base of seventy feet diameter. During the month of November, 1841, it was removed in order to grade one of the streets and an alley. In the center of the mound and slightly below the surrounding surface, a skeleton greatly decomposed and other relics were found. The 'Cincinnati Tablet' was taken from under the skull of the decayed skeleton. The representations here given are of the actual dimensions of the original stone. The artist who



CINCINNATI TABLET (*Front View*).

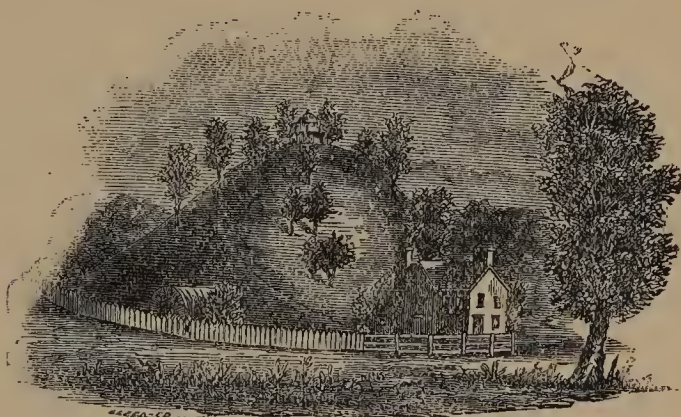


CINCINNATI TABLET (*Reverse View*).

made the engraving had the tablet before his eye and his work is a correct copy. Out of all the engravings which have been made, Robert Clarke pronounces this to be the best. So far, then, as general purposes are concerned, the reader can be as well benefited by our engravings as he would be though he held in his hand the original."

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MOUND BUILDERS.
—In representing the nation of the Mound Builders as having been overwhelmed by the races of the south, I base the statement on fairly good historical evidence. In discussing what became of the Mound Builders, Mac Lean says: "It would be impossible to tell whether the Mound Builders were the original Nahoas, and as such immigrated into Mexico, or the Toltecs, and as such came later. Whichever may be true, still it appears to be certain that the Mound Builders did immigrate into Mexico. This is proven from the fact that the farther south we go, we discover a gradual improvement in their structures, which finally develop into the higher architecture of Mexico. If the Mound Builders had come from Mexico, then their structures would have remained the same, or else they would have passed into a higher architecture as they proceeded north. In the light of modern discovery and scientific investigation, we are able to follow the Mound Builders. We first

found them in Ohio, engaged in tilling the soil and developing a civilization peculiar to themselves. Driven from their homes, they sought



THE GRAVE CREEK MOUND.

an asylum in the south, and from there they wandered into Mexico, where we begin to learn something more definite concerning them.”

CLOTHING.—“The Mound Builders, in part, used the skins of wild animals for clothing, but for their principal raiment used cloth regularly spun with a uniform thread, and woven with a warp and woof. Fragments of clothing have been taken from a low mound near Charlestown, Jackson County, Ohio. In constructing the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad, a mound was cut through near Middletown, Butler County, Ohio, and in it, among other things, was found cloth connected with tassels or ornaments. The cloth was in thick folds,

and very much charred. The fabric appeared to have been composed of some material allied to hemp, and the separation between the fiber and the wood was as thorough as at this day by the process of rotting and hackling. The thread is coarse, uniform in size, and regularly spun. The process of spinning and weaving as carried on by them is not now known.”—MAC LEAN, *The Mound Builders*.

WORKS OF REFERENCE.—Before commencing work on “The Vanished Empire,” I read many volumes of archæological literature. Believing that many will desire to study the subject of the Mound Builders more exhaustively, and wishing to catalogue those works to which I am more or less indebted, I append the following list of references:

Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley,
Squier and Davis.

Bradford’s American Antiquities.

Baldwin’s Ancient America.

Foster’s Prehistoric Races of the U. S. A.

Bancroft’s Native Races.

Jones’ Mound Builders of Tennessee.

Fort Ancient: W. K. Moorehead.

Ohio Centennial Report (1876).

To What Race Did the Mound Builders Belong?

M. F. Force.

The Serpent Mound: W. H. Holmes, in *Science*,
Dec. 31, 1886.

Who Built the Mounds? Dr. R. P. Hoy.

Primitive Man in Ohio: W. K. Moorehead.

Prehistoric America: Peet.

Description of the Serpent Mound: In *Century Magazine*, April, 1890, by Prof. F. W. Putnam. .

Archæological History of Ohio: Fowke.

The Mound Builders: J. P. MacLean.

Archæology of Ohio: M. C. Read.

Western Antiquities: Caleb Atwater, 1833.

The following works by Prof. Cyrus Thomas: Catalogue of Prehistoric Works East of the Rocky Mountains; A Study of the Manuscript Troano; Burial Mounds of the Northern Sections of the United States; Aids to the Study of the Maya Codices; Notes on Certain Maya and Mexican Manuscripts; Problem of the Ohio Mounds; The Cherokees in Pre-Columbian Times; Introduction to the Study of North American Archæology.

The Stone Age, An Archæological Encyclopedia: Warren K. Moorehead. Two vols., octavo. To appear in 1905.

Most valuable articles bearing directly on the subject may be found in the following journals and reports:

The American Anthropologist.

The American Antiquarian.

The American Archæologist.

The Antiquarian.

Transactions of the American Antiquarian Society.

Annual Reports of the Bureau of Ethnology.

The American Journal of Archæology.

Journal of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History.

Publications of the Ohio Archæological and Historical Society.

Journal of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio.

Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge.

Annual Reports of the Smithsonian Institution.

Transactions of the American Ethnological Society.

Western Historical Society Tracts.

Reports of the U. S. National Museum.

Cincinnati Quarterly Journal of Science.

[I wish, here, to acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. J. P. Mac Lean, who not only allowed me to draw freely upon his writings, but also extended every other possible aid and courtesy to me.—THE AUTHOR.]

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